

Arafat and King discuss murder attempt and Mideast peace

GAZA CITY (AFP) — King Hussein and Palestinian President Yasser Arafat spoke by phone Saturday and discussed the strong relations between Jordan and the Palestinian National Authority (PNA), the official Palestinian news agency, Wafa, reported. The two leaders discussed "recent political developments," including Wednesday's summit meeting between President Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu — the first of its kind for eight months. Relations between King Hussein and President Arafat have been strained by Israel's decision to bow to Jordanian demands to release Sheikh Ahmad Yassin, the spiritual leader of Hamas, the main opposition movement to the PNA.

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Two Palestinians arrested with explosives

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — Two Palestinians have been arrested with 80 kilograms of explosive materials but their intentions were not clear, an Israeli police spokesman said Saturday. Police said the case appeared of a criminal nature but the Palestinians arrested early Friday in east Jerusalem may have intended to sell the explosives to Islamists planning bombings against Israel. The pair had a few months ago stolen the explosives and ignition materials from an Israeli quarry near Jerusalem. Police said their main line of investigation focused on probable attempts by the two to sell the explosives to Israeli contractors but they had not ruled out the possibility they intended to sell to Islamists.

No breakthroughs from Netanyahu-Arafat talks — Egypt

CAIRO (AFP) — Egypt's foreign minister said Saturday that this week's meeting between Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian President Yasser Arafat produced no breakthroughs. "According to reports we have received, the meeting ended without result and no serious discussion took place on the principle problems blocking the peace process," said Amr Musa. The Egyptian diplomat made the statement to reporters following a meeting Saturday between Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and visiting Indian Prime Minister Inder Kumar Gujral. Mr. Netanyahu and Mr. Arafat held a pre-dawn summit meeting, their first in eight months, Wednesday at the Erez Crossing.

Iran reaffirms total support for Lebanese Hizbollah

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran Saturday expressed its "full support" for the Islamic resistance, the Iranian-backed military wing of the Hizbollah movement that is waging a guerrilla war against Israel's occupation of south Lebanon. "We support any struggle aimed at freeing the whole of occupied Islamic and Arab territory in Palestine and in Syria," Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Mohammad Sadr told the Islamic Republic News Agency. Mr. Sadr was speaking after talks here with Hizbollah secretary general, Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah, who arrived in Tehran on Friday with a Hizbollah delegation.

Libya criticises Western, Egyptian joint military exercise

TRIPOLI (AFP) — Libya has criticised a joint military exercise between Egypt and three NATO powers taking place in the Egyptian desert, according to the official Libyan News Agency, JANA. The agency said that Egypt's "permitted foreign troops to train on Arab territory, waters, and airspace represents a danger to Arab security." Egypt, France, Britain and the United States are taking part in the military exercise, dubbed "Bright Star 97," which began Thursday. Troops from Italy, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates are also due to participate in the manoeuvres which are to continue until Sunday.

68 new runners join poll race bringing total to 508

Haddadin to sue after Amman governor orders 195 'anti-Israeli' banners down

By Francesca Ciriaci
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Sixty-eight new candidates signed in yesterday, on the second day of official registration for the Nov. 4 elections, bringing the number of candidates so far to 508. Registration procedures will continue today until 2:00 p.m., for the third and final day, the Ministry of Interior said Saturday. The number of women who joined the race went up to 18, with five new women candidates registering yesterday. In the 1993 elections, 559 candidates including only three women ran for Parliament. The candidates who registered in the first two days of the registration period are distributed as follows: The Capital and Central Bedouins: 124; Irbid: 95; Jerash: 19; Balqa: 45; Zarqa: 35; Ajloun: 35; Mafrqa and Northern Bedouins: 31; Karak: 42; Ma'an and the Southern

Bedouins: 32; Aqaba: 9; Madaba: 25; Tafleeh: 16.

While the newly registered candidates have already started distributing leaflets and hanging banners in the streets, this year's campaigns seem overall poor in political messages and even issueless in some rural districts. The absence of the main opposition groups seems to have prejudged the debate on many issues, especially the peace process, which heated up the last elections. The overwhelming majority of candidates, though stressing that Israel must abide by the already signed treaties, are declaring themselves in favour of signed peace accords and normalisation of ties with Israel. Samihah Tal, a new face running in Irbid, said "Jordan has not lost anything signing peace [with Israel], but rather gained rights

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Haj quits election race following peer pressure

By Francesca Ciriaci
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A former Islamic Action Front (IAF) deputy yesterday retracted his earlier decision to defy his party's boycott and run in the Nov. 4 elections. In a handwritten statement to the press, former Zarqa Deputy Mohammad Haj said he decided to blow off the "candle [he had] lit in the dark" because he was asked to do so by "many brothers and friends, ... my teachers in life, whom I could not refuse [the request]". "In the beginning, I thought that ... participating was better than shying away, ... and lighting a candle was better than staying in the dark," Dr. Haj wrote, adding that he had also already found "good friends and brothers" who

were supporting and helping him to organise the campaign. However, after some of his closest and most respected friends went to his house and asked him to withdraw, he consented "out of respect," Dr. Haj said. The Muslim Brotherhood and the IAF have on different occasions reiterated that both those members who will run and those who will vote in the upcoming elections will be punished with expulsion. The Muslim Brotherhood, the IAF and other nine opposition parties, as well as a list of popular independent personalities called earlier this summer for a general boycott citing the normalisation of ties

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PLC speaker denies Jordan-PNA relations in trouble over Yassin

By Tareq Ayyoub
with combined agency dispatches

THE SPEAKER of the Palestine Legislative Council, Ahmad Qureia, Saturday dismissed news reports that Palestinian President Yasser Arafat accused Jordan of seeking to undermine his leadership in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. "That is not true,"

absolutely untrue. The Jordanian-Palestinian relationship is stable, solid and based on strong pillars," Mr. Qureia told reporters following a meeting with Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali yesterday during which he delivered a message from President Arafat to His Majesty King Hussein. "What was attributed to Abu Ammar [President

Arafat's nom de guerre] is unfounded and baseless," the Palestinian official said during a press conference. Mr. Qureia was responding to a question on news reports which quoted Mr. Arafat as saying at a closed-door meeting of the legislative council last week that the release of

(Continued on page 12)

Mutawi says all Jordanian prisoners in Israel released

Families of prisoners contest statement

AMMAN (J.T.) — Even though the government on Saturday said that all 23 Jordanian prisoners in Israeli jails were released, at least two families say their sons are still being held prisoners in the Jewish state.

Israel has released "all Jordanian prisoners from its jails," Minister of State for Information Affairs Samir Mutawi told reporters Saturday. "Available information indicates that 23 Jordanian

prisoners were in Israel. Nine arrived in Jordan while the remaining 14 [of Palestinian origin] were released and sent by Israel to their homes in the West Bank... All Jordanian prisoners are free now," the minister said. The release of the Jordanian prisoners followed an attempt on the life of Khaled Misha'al followed by the exchange of two Israeli Mossad agents with Hamas spiritual leader Ahmad Yassin and tens of

(Continued on page 2)

No Mossad office existed; cooperation continues according to treaty — Mutawi

By Tareq Ayyoub
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The government on Saturday dismissed news reports that Jordan has expelled several Israeli Mossad agents based in Amman for their involvement in the assassination attempt on a Hamas leader last month. "There is no Mossad office in Amman and there are no Israeli intelligence

officers as such," Minister of State for Information Affairs Samir Mutawi told reporters following the weekly Cabinet session. "All over the world, there is a diplomatic representation, where you have lists of diplomats accepted [by the host countries]. They also include administrative employees who have their own work," the minister added. "What is happening inside the Israeli embassy is

their own business, but [to say that] there is an office for the Mossad in Jordan is not true, such an office does not exist," Dr. Mutawi stressed. The minister was responding to news reports that originated from Israel that His Majesty King Hussein ordered the Mossad office at the Israeli embassy in Amman be closed.

(Continued on page 2)

Israeli army says Jordanian shot, killed by Israeli troops

TEL AVIV (AP) — A Jordanian man was shot and killed by Israeli troops while trying to enter Israel illegally, the Israeli army announced Saturday. The incident occurred Friday around 10:30 p.m. along the Israeli-Jordanian border in the Jordan Valley. It was only announced by Israel Saturday at sundown.

"Large army forces... began an immediate chase of the infiltrator and extra forces were called in. Within a short period of time the forces caught the infiltrator close to the fence, shot and killed him," the Israeli army statement said.

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GID seizes weapons intended to destabilise Kingdom

AMMAN (Petra) — The General Intelligence Department (GID) Saturday announced that it has recently seized a large haul of weapons smuggled into Jordan by extremist groups abroad intending to tamper with the Kingdom's stability and security.

A GID statement said that units from its Anti-Corruption Department have recently seized more than four hundred and fifty pieces of weapons ranging from revolvers to automatic guns in addition to a large amount of ammunition. The statement noted that the GID has discovered

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PNA aviation staff complete training, but still no airport

RAFAH (AFP) — One hundred Palestinians Saturday completed training for operating an airport in the Gaza Strip, despite Israel's refusal so far to let the airport open. The trainees, mostly from Palestinian National Authority (PNA) areas, took part in a graduation ceremony at the Gaza terminal in Rafah after returning recently from Morocco, said Fayez Zaydan, the head of the Palestinian Aviation Authority. They will oversee various matters at the airport including passport and customs controls, ticket checks and technical operations. Another group of 67 Palestinians will soon leave for one-year training in Morocco, Mr. Zaydan said. The opening of the airport is one of several articles in interim self-rule agreements which Israel has not implemented and has been delayed due to disagreement between the PNA and Israel over security. At a meeting of negotiators last week, the sides could also not agree on the start of Palestinian President Yasser Arafat's use of the airport. The talks are due to resume today.



The first security and airport services graduates parade at the Palestinian International Airport in the Gaza Strip of Rafah Saturday (Reuters photo)

IAEA submits positive report on Iraq, but keeps file open

UNITED NATIONS (AFP) — The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) on Friday submitted a generally positive report on the dismantling of Iraq's nuclear weapons and capability. But IAEA Director-General Hans Blix, in his regular report to the 15-member Security Council on Iraqi nuclear disarmament stressed that "the IAEA is not 'closing the books' on its investigation of Iraq's clandestine nuclear programme."

Mr. Blix, the outgoing IAEA chief, is due to brief the Security Council on Thursday, along with the U.N. Special Commission chief Richard Butler who has just submitted his own six-month report. Under U.N. resolutions adopted after the 1991 Gulf war, Iraq is to remain under international sanctions until the U.N. arms inspectors certify the dismantling of all Iraqi weapons of mass destruction. The Vienna-based IAEA is monitoring the nuclear sector while Mr. Butler's inspectors are in charge of verifying the dismantling of Iraq's chemical and biological weaponry, and missiles with a range of more than 150 kilometres.

During on-site inspections since April, the IAEA had not found "indications of the existence in Iraq of prohibited material or activities," Mr. Blix said. Discussing developments since 1991, Mr. Blix said in an overview that his agency was able to state that "there are no indications to suggest that Iraq was successful in its attempt to produce nuclear weapons." But, he added, "certain documentary evidence is missing and some gaps in knowledge remain." Iraq had been "at or close to" succeeding in producing highly-enriched

(Continued on page 12)

Turkish deputy PM wants troops in Iraq indefinitely

DIYARBAKIR (AP) — Turkish troops should stay indefinitely in northern Iraq to ward off Kurdish rebels from carrying out cross-border attacks, Deputy Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit said Friday. "Until Iraq reunites, our armed forces should settle down in the mountainous region," Mr. Ecevit told reporters during his visit to this Kurdish-dominated southeastern city. His remarks were carried

by the Anatolia news agency. Baghdad has lost control over northern Iraq after the Gulf war. U.S.-led warplanes monitor a "no-fly zone" to keep President Saddam Hussein's troops away from the region, controlled by rival Kurdish groups. Kurdish rebels fighting for autonomy in Turkey's south-east have also taken advantage of the power vacuum, setting up bases in northern Iraq to launch cross-border attacks at Turkish targets.

Turkish troops have gone into northern Iraq several times in the last few years, trying to wipe out the rebel presence. But each time troops leave, guerrillas return. Turkey has floated the idea of a permanent buffer zone inside Iraq before, but met fierce international opposition. "We are considering the

(Continued on page 12)

Qatar issues 92 invitations to MENA; 2,500 foreign participants expected

DOHA (AFP) — Qatar has invited 92 countries and organisations to next month's Middle East and North Africa (MENA) economic conference in Doha, a top official organising the forum said Saturday. Mohammad Ismail, president of the organising committee, said the Foreign Ministry has issued invitations to the Nov. 16-18 conference to "foreign ministers (of Middle Eastern and African countries),

the secretary general of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), the Arab League, the United Nations, the European Commission, and a number of international organisations." Qatar expects some 2,500 foreign participants, among them around 800 government delegates, 800 businessmen, 300 representatives of international or regional organisations, and 500 journalists. Some 500 people are to attend the Doha confer-

ence from Qatar itself. Two of Qatar's fellow Gulf Arab states, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, have said they would not attend the conference because of the deadlock in the Arab-Israeli peace process. No Arab country has yet officially announced that it will take part in the conference, at which Secretary of State Madeleine Albright is to represent the United States.

Hamas leader predicts end of Israel

ple and property," he told Focus.

But he said and group would not take part in negotiations with Israel even if its conditions are met.

"We do not intend to take part in future negotiations, even if our demands are satisfied," he said. "This is the duty of the Palestinian self-rule authority."

He said he had "good personal relations" with Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat.

Hamas rejects the self-rule accords with Israel, and has conducted a campaign of attacks that have killed scores of Israelis since 1994.

joint military exercises. Earlier in Abu Dhabi, Gen. Zinni met with Army Chief of Staff Sheikh Mohammad Ben Zayed Al Nahyan on cooperation between the U.S. and the United Arab Emirates. Gen. Zinni is on a tour of several monarchies in the Gulf.

During the incident, the Israeli army said it sealed off nearby Israeli settlements and brought in extra forces to the area.

It said the official declined to disclose the number of Mossad agents who were expelled saying only: "They have been expelled from Jordan."

On Friday, the Israeli daily Maariv said that Mossad agents were expelled upon orders from King Hussein.

Dr. Mutawi denied that Jordan has demanded Israel to "decrease the number of Israeli embassy employees in Amman" in connection with the attack on the life of Mr. Misha'al.

According to the statement, these groups have resorted to new techniques in weapon smuggling, adding that the seizure of these weapons has aborted these group's plans.

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by Israeli troops

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"a joint military exercise between the Jordanian and Israeli forces in the area."

It was the first time the Israeli army had been in the area since the 1994 peace agreement.

On Friday, the Israeli army expelled the Palestinian police from the area.

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Summit looks to freer, fairer 21st century Europe

STRASBOURG, France (R) — Leaders of 40 nations at a Council of Europe summit Saturday pledged to ban human cloning and passed a series of recommendations to make the continent freer and fairer as it goes into the 21st century.

The rare two-day meeting wound up after taking a closer look at democracy in ex-Communist states, hearing from new and would-be members about how they are implementing the rule of law.

The issue goes to the heart of the work of the council, which began in 1949 as a Western assembly promoting democracy and human rights and rapidly embraced almost all East European states after the fall of Communism in 1989-1991 if they promised to play by the rules.

In reality, members like Ukraine are suspected of continuing executions despite a council ban and Russia was publicly taken to task by Norwegian Prime Minister Thorbjørn Jagland over the case of an environmentalist charged with treason.

The summit's final declaration said the council would play a bigger role in

protecting human and social rights and helping member states face the challenges of changing societies.

French Prime Minister Lionel Jospin, in the closing speech, said the council, and its social development fund, had a role to play in fighting unemployment which he called "the biggest challenge we have to face, at the end of the 20th century, at the continental level".

Among the meeting's main agreements was a pledge to enforce a ban on any technique of human cloning that would attempt to create "a human being identical to another human being, whether living or dead".

The summit endorsed plans to install a new European court of human rights next year with enhanced powers and streamlined procedures to cut current long delays.

The plan is for the Strasbourg-based court to sit full-time, shed its present screening commission and receive pleas directly from European citizens.

It court currently takes an average of five years to give its rulings, which are binding for member states. Last year it took up 624 of

12,161 pleas it received.

The declaration listed among its goals the universal abolition of the death penalty, real equality between men and women, and development of local democracy.

It pledged to improve protection of ethnic minorities, the poor, refugees, asylum seekers and migrant workers, and to shield women and children from violence and sexual abuse.

It pledged to step up its battle against international scourges such as terrorism, organised crime, money laundering, drug trafficking, racism and anti-semitism.

The summit mentioned no specific measures, mostly leaving it to the council's Committee of Ministers to implement its goals.

Speeches revealed different views of the purpose of the council, a less-known body than the European Union — from which it is completely separate — and the possible rival Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

While West European states stressed the council's role in setting human rights standards for all states, eastern leaders like Russia's

Boris Yeltsin and Ukraine's Leonid Kuchma saw it as a new forum for broad European cooperation.

One apparently attractive feature of the council was that the United States, a heavyweight in the OSCE and leading power in a NATO alliance expanding eastwards, is not a member.

In his speech Friday, Mr. Yeltsin took swipes at the U.S. by calling for a "Europe without dividing lines" and denouncing "forces trying to isolate Moscow... forces which do not understand that Europe without Russia is not Europe".

Mr. Kuchma said the council should take on a security role in Europe and become "a sort of legislative body in the system of European institutions".

Bulgaria's President Petar Stoyanov was much more on the Western wavelength when he told the council it had to help define European democracy for the 21st century.

"This is a much more demanding and broader objective because the process of reforming the mind requires more time and determination than political and economic reforms," he said.



Microsoft chairman Bill Gates (right) smiles while Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin looks on before their talks in White House government building in Moscow. The software multi-billionaire is in Moscow to promote Microsoft products in high-level meetings often reserved for top government officials (Reuter photo)

Gates, Chernomyrdin agree fight on computer piracy

MOSCOW (R) — Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin told visiting Microsoft chairman Bill Gates Saturday he shared concerns about computer piracy in Russia and vowed to help fight it.

"We are aware about your concerns over piracy which we are also troubled with," Mr. Chernomyrdin told Mr. Gates at the start of their meeting.

"According to our information its share (of the market) reaches 70 per cent but in the last years there has been a tendency towards reducing it," he continued, adding that Russia was ready to work to protect intellectual property.

Government spokesman Igor Shabdrasulov told Interfax news agency later that the two men had reached an agreement on a joint fight against piracy.

He did not give details of the deal, but quoted Mr. Gates as telling Mr. Chernomyrdin: "Piracy by companies which are selling cheap, unlicensed copies of computer programmes harm not only

Microsoft and other Western companies but also slows down the development of Russian industry which produces computer programmes."

Street kiosks and disc markets openly sell pirated copies of many of Microsoft's most popular programmes in Moscow.

Mr. Shabdrasulov said Mr. Gates and Mr. Chernomyrdin had agreed that Microsoft would help develop software production in Russia.

The Software multi-billionaire was in Moscow to promote Microsoft products in high-level meetings. He talked with first deputy Prime Minister Anatoly Chubais for an hour Friday.

Mr. Gates said Russians were well positioned to develop software because of their strong educational background.

He also met some of the country's top bankers and business executives, including the head of savings bank chain Sberbank and the chairman of Russia's central bank.

The chairman of Sberbank, Andrei Kazmin,

said they had signed a \$1.65 million agreement with Microsoft for the U.S. firm to provide software. Interfax said Friday.

Automation will also help Sberbank and other Russian financial institutions comply with new regulations that take effect after Jan. 1, including ruble redenomination, which will lop three zeros off the currency.

ITAR-TASS news agency quoted the head of the central bank, Sergei Dubinin, as telling Mr. Gates Friday that the bank had plans to launch its first satellite to create a global clearing and financial information network.

Mr. Dubinin said the launch would take place on Nov. 12, with the system going into service in 1999, the report said.

Mr. Gates also signed a protocol on providing software and services to Russia's largest oil company, Lukoil, a Lukoil statement said. The firm said it had concluded a large contract for software including the Microsoft exchange server last month.

Confusion reigns in Brazzaville as fighting rages

KINSHASA (AFP) — Fierce fighting raged around Brazzaville airport Saturday between supporters of President Pascal Lissouba and his rival Denis Sassou Nguesso, amid conflicting claims as to which side was in control.

Heavy and automatic weapons fire were heard around Maya-Maya airport west of the city, a reliable source told AFP, adding that it was possible it had fallen to Mr. Sassou Nguesso's "Cobra" militiamen.

Automatic weapons fire and sporadic shelling could also be heard in the centre of Brazzaville, but there was no clear idea which sectors were affected.

Aides close to Mr. Sassou Nguesso said Friday that the former military ruler's forces had swept aside loyalist troops to seize the airport and the deserted presidential palace after intense fighting this week.

And during a visit to Kinshasa, across the Congo River from Brazzaville, the president seemed to concede the loss of the airport.

"We lost one battle, but that doesn't mean we lost the war," Mr. Lissouba told reporters.

But the spokesman for Congolese Prime Minister Bernard Kolelas said later that the loyalists had beaten back an opposition offensive against the airport

launched Thursday.

"Our forces pushed them back far from the airport," spokesman Naason Elo Mampouya said by telephone from Brazzaville.

Reports that the airport had fallen are in flagrant contradiction with reality.

He also said there had been no fighting round the presidential palace which Mr. Lissouba had evacuated at the outbreak of hostilities on June 5.

In a sign of disruption at the airport, internal flights have been suspended this week for the first time in four months of hostilities.

The fighting in Brazzaville erupted after Mr. Lissouba tried to disarm political militias ahead of presidential elections that were scheduled for July, but which have now been put off indefinitely.

At least 4,000 people have died and thousands more have fled their homes.

Mr. Sassou Nguesso, who was defeated by Mr. Lissouba five years ago in multi-party elections, refuses to recognise the extension of Mr. Lissouba's mandate following the postponement of elections.

The barrage of military claims and counterclaims here are part of the strategy of the warring sides, who make the most of the lack of independent information to put out their own version of

events.

An independent source in Brazzaville told AFP that "total confusion reigns in the Congolese capital where even people supposed to know what is happening do not always have the information."

"However, it seems that the airport is under the control of Mr. Sassou Nguesso's supporters," the source said, explaining the government's denials by the fact that the prime minister "does not know what is happening on the ground."

The source said he did not know what was happening around the presidential palace, which is situated in the south of Brazzaville some distance from the front line of fighting.

Mr. Sassou Nguesso's forces have made several gains in an offensive this week, seizing back the prime minister's office, rail station and a fuel depot that they had earlier lost to Mr. Lissouba's forces.

Mr. Lissouba also visited Kampala Friday, where he briefed Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni on the situation in Congo and discussed regional matters in general, Mr. Museveni's office said in a statement.

Mr. Lissouba travelled from Kampala Friday night for Kinshasa, the capital of the Democratic Republic of Congo, the statement said.

Indian wins record pay-out for racial bias

LONDON (AFP) — An Indian-born British man who lost his job in a town council's Computer Department has been awarded a record pay-out for racial discrimination by a tribunal here.

Don D'Souza, 62, won £360,000 (\$540,000) from Lambeth Council in south London after a seven-year battle over his sacking in a case which the tribunal described as the worst case it had ever heard.

Mr. D'Souza said after the hearing that he deserved every penny because the authority had wrecked his career and deprived him of his livelihood.

He was sacked in 1990 after four years as manager of the council's Computer Department on an annual salary of £39,000 during which he said he was harassed by white colleagues and repeatedly passed over for promotion because of his race.

The employment appeals tribunal ruled that he had been "the victim of shameful treatment and deprived of his job by a campaign of racial discrimination and victimisation."

"In the experience of this court, this is the worst case of unlawful race discrimination that it has ever had to consider."

The council said it had now sent out a letter to all staff stressing that racist behaviour would not be tolerated.

The tribunal said the award was intended to put Mr. D'Souza in the position he would have been had he remained in Lambeth's employment until retirement at 65.

A spokesman for the cash-strapped council told the Daily Mail: "We are already under considerable financial pressure and we don't have the resources to cover his payment."

The Daily Mail noted that the amount would pay the salaries of 16 teachers for a year.

Singapore bans Janet Jackson album

SINGAPORE (AFP) — Singapore censors have banned U.S. pop singer Janet Jackson's latest album *The Velvet Rope* because lyrics in three songs were found to be objectionable, the Straits Times reported Saturday.

The Controller of Undesirable Publications found words used in the songs — one about battery and abuse, another on homosexuality and a third on sexuality — unacceptable, the newspaper said.

Jackson is the younger sister of pop superstar Michael Jackson. The album is her first since the successful 1993 release *"Janet"*, the report said.

Officials of her record label EMI International were not available for comment Saturday but staff at leading music

retailer Tower Records confirmed that the album was officially banned from the shelves.

The Straits Times said EMI was looking into the possibility of releasing a special version of the album without the three songs for the Singapore market.

The newspaper carried a U.S. daily's review of the album saying that the work examines Jackson's unresolved issues from her childhood, and pressures she has felt as an adult.

Singapore maintains strict laws on obscenity and pornography. Sex videos and magazines like *Playboy* are banned, and obscene sites on the Internet are screened out by service providers, with varying degrees of success.

2 quakes jolt Japan

TOKYO (AFP) — Two moderate earthquakes hit Japan Saturday, but there were no reports of casualties or damage, the meteorological agency and police said.

An earthquake measuring 5.3 on the Richter scale jolted northern Japan at 6:45 p.m. (0945 GMT), agency officials said.

The epicentre of the quake was located in the Pacific Ocean off Miyagi prefecture about 400 kilometres northeast of Tokyo, the officials said.

Earlier in the day, another quake measuring 5.0 on the Richter scale shook areas of central Japan.

Police officials said they had not received any reports of casualties or damage following the two earthquakes. There were no worries of "tsunami" tidal waves from the quakes, the agency said.

German trade fair offers food for thought

COLOGNE, Germany (AFP) — The trend towards global trade is likely to have a profound effect on eating patterns in the 21st century along with revolutionary new techniques in "convenience foods," the German Food Fair opening here Saturday demonstrates.

After cocktail appetisers made from crocodile, kangaroo or emu meat, imported from Australia, the gourmet meal of the future might include German sausage and pudding stamped "Made in U.S.A.," all washed down with unpasteurised beer from Lapland or mineral water from the Andes.

This is the culinary dream — or nightmare — conjured up by the ANUGA fair where 6,540 exhibitors are taking part from 103 countries.

According to Elisabeth Nuernberger, spokeswoman for the Cologne Fair, the broad trends are the "internationalisation of the cooking pot and convenience foods."

She said convenience products had no need to be washed, peeled or cut up, and were ready for cooking either in the traditional way or microwaved for maximum speed.

A specialised institute in Neumuenster in northern

Germany has estimated that on weekdays, a German couple devotes no more than 15 minutes to preparing a hot meal.

Shortly, the same couple will be able to get a portion of chips (French fries) from a distributor in the same way as people now buy cigarettes.

The German-designed FruitMaster machine functions like a coffee machine and offers a selection ranging from plain chips, to chips with ketchup, chips with mayonnaise and so forth, all served in edible plates made from maize flour.

"It takes 90 seconds for a portion of 180 grammes," said Thomas Schluenzen, manager of PF Warenautomaten. He said the machine was ready for marketing immediately.

Thanks to an innovation by the Belgian firm Shop 24, consumers are already able to buy frozen foods and yoghurts 24 hours a day at a store where automatic distributors have replaced the personnel.

Automatic cash tills are able to differentiate between national and foreign currencies, will reject forged notes and are already preparing to handle the European single currency.

"Buy global, sell local," is

the slogan of the ANUGA fair which is reserved for food professionals.

There is no lack of choice for those looking for something exotic: fresh water lobster from Ecuador, champagne sausage, loaves made of Mexican beans, cereals with chocolate marshmallows from the United States.

As for drinks, Germany offers a vodka made from hemp and an anti-stress brew made from passion flowers, hops and Melissa spiked with vitamins and magnesium.

Above all, the trend is for healthy foods and packaging which protects the environment.

The share of biologically-grown foods in the German diet has grown from four per cent in 1988 to 17 per cent last year. Even drinks mixing coca and brandy tend to discourage alcohol abuse. Fruit juices are enriched with vitamins, dairy products have added calcium and the Finns are promoting "genius" eggs which are good for the heart because of their low content of fatty acids.

The French firm Danone has yoghurts in pots which disintegrate when mixed with compost.

Tourists warned of axe attacks in Sydney

SYDNEY (AFP) — Police warned tourists Saturday to be careful when visiting the bustling Kings Cross red light district following a second axe attack there on an overseas visitor.

In the latest attack late Wednesday, a man befriended a 24-year-old Irish backpacker and then tried to attack him with an axe in a park, police inspector Royce Gorman said.

The tourist fended off the axeman and was unhurt, he said.

In the first attack last month, 25-year-old Czech tourist Jiri Zoufal was hacked to death at a busy intersection in the inner suburb.

Despite a major investigation and a public plea for help, police have been unable to find the man who wielded the axe.

"We're saying to tourists in the area, the same as we would say to anyone else, to take care... and to be careful not to be flamboyant with their money or valuables, and to remain in the main street or main area of Kings Cross," Mr. Gorman added.

"Any attack with an axe at the present time is of concern to us on the very basis that there's still a very brutal murderer on the loose," Mr. Gorman said.

Russian negotiator Chechen leader try to revive peace talks

GROZNY, Russia (AFP) — Russian Security Council Secretary Ivan Rybkin began talks here Saturday with Chechen President Aslan Maskhadov, in a bid to inject new impetus into the flagging peace process.

On arrival in the Chechen capital Mr. Rybkin welcomed the fact that next week the Russian and Chechen parliaments would discuss draft peace treaties presented by each side.

"This is a step forward, in line with the accords signed earlier," Mr. Rybkin said, referring to a treaty signed by Mr. Maskhadov and Russian President Boris Yeltsin in the Kremlin in May and subsequent agreements on aid for Chechnya, the oil industry and other matters.

The two sides aim to hammer out a new, wide-ranging treaty defining Moscow's future relations with the rebel republic, devastated in the 21-month conflict between separatists and Russian forces which ended in August 1996.

Mr. Rybkin, who was on a one-day visit, confirmed that Chechen representatives had been invited to a debate on Chechnya in the Russian parliament slated for Tuesday.

The Chechen side will present a draft treaty which would grant independence to the tiny North Caucasus Republic. Russian representatives will present their own draft, under which Chechnya would remain part of the Russian Federation.

Mr. Rybkin said the Russian and Chechen constitutional courts could also join in discussion of the treaty.

Mr. Maskhadov's spokesman Kazbek Khadzhiyev said there were no plans yet for another Yeltsin-Maskhadov summit.

Mr. Maskhadov, quoted by Interfax, said he was ready to continue the dialogue with Moscow on any level, and the positions of both presidents "allow one to say that relations between Moscow and Grozny will be normal."

Under the truce agreement clinched in August 1996, both sides agreed to postpone a final decision on Chechnya's political status for five years.

Chechen Deputy Prime Minister Akhmed Zakayev reiterated Grozny's bottom line, saying Chechnya "is an independent state, and the aim of the talks with Russia is to achieve recognition."

Mr. Rybkin, however, said Chechnya could acquire independence as part of the Russian Federation, and cited Bavaria's relationship with the federal government in Germany as an example.

Mr. Rybkin said he would also discuss the future of the Russian mission in Chechnya with Mr. Maskhadov.

Relations between Russia and Chechnya nosedived 10 days ago, when Grozny expelled Russian representatives due to a dispute on opening an air corridor to the ex-Soviet republic of Azerbaijan. The matter was later resolved.

Referring to the Russian mission, Mr. Rybkin said: "If we decide that this is a superfluous structure it will be abolished, and in that case the Russian and Chechen governments will have direct contacts."

Security Council spokesman Igor Ignatiev said Russian-Chechen talks in the Black Sea resort of Sochi Thursday had allowed "serious complications" in Moscow's relations with Grozny to be overcome, and "concrete steps to be made towards strengthening the peace process."

Meanwhile, Khodzibek Akhmedov, head of Chechnya's Southern Oil Company (YUNKO), told ITAR-TASS that repairs to a key pipeline crossing Chechnya would be completed by Oct. 20.

World News

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Russian negotiator, Chechen leader try to revive peace talks

GRUZYI, Russia (AFP) — Russian Security Council Secretary Ivan Rybin here Saturday said Chechen President Aslan Maskhadov, in a bid to revive peace talks, had agreed to meet with Russian negotiators.

On arrival in the Chechen capital Mr. Rybin welcomed the fact that the Russian and Chechen negotiators would discuss the peace treaty provisions each side.

"This is a step forward in line with the peace talks," Mr. Rybin said, referring to a meeting between Mr. Maskhadov and Russian President Boris Yeltsin in Moscow in May, and subsequent agreements on ending the conflict.

The two sides also agreed to meet in a new, neutral venue, adding that future relations between the republic and Russia would be based on mutual respect and equality.

Mr. Rybin said the Chechen negotiators had agreed to meet with Russian negotiators in Moscow on Sunday.

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Residents rescue a refrigerator from their flooded homes, after Hurricane Pauline devastated Mexico's most famous tourist resort (Reuter photo)

Queen Elizabeth arrives in India later today

NEW DELHI (AFP) — Britain's Queen Elizabeth II is expected to arrive in India today on a six-day visit coinciding with the country's 50th year of independence from British rule.

The British monarch and her husband Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh, will arrive in New Delhi from Pakistan late Sunday, officials said.

The queen will be given a ceremonial welcome at the British-built presidential palace here Monday and will later meet President Shankar Dayal Sharma and Prime Minister Inder Kumar Gujral.

She will lay a wreath at a memorial to Mahatma Gandhi, the hero of India's independence movement, in New Delhi and attend an official banquet later in the evening.

The visit will be the queen's third trip to India — a country which has had links with Britain since 1600 — and she is scheduled to visit a war cemetery for British troops and meet Indian veterans, including soldiers decorated with Britain's highest military honour, the Victoria Cross.

Queen Elizabeth and the Duke of Edinburgh will also visit the northern town of Amritsar. She will lay a wreath at Jallianwalla Bagh, the site of a 1919 massacre of Indian civilians by British colonial troops in which 379 people were shot dead and around 1,200 injured after troops fired on a public meeting.

The royal couple will also visit the Golden Temple, Sikhdom's holiest shrine, in Amritsar.

In New Delhi, the queen will visit the headquarters of the Delhi Brotherhood Society, an order of British priests who set up base here in 1877, and open a British trade fair and an exhibition of artefacts from the British museum.

She will also visit the southern cities of Madras and Cochin where she will see a film shooting, visit a memorial where former Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi was assassinated, as well as a charity home run by a trust founded by British World War II ace pilot Leonard Cheshire.

In Cochin, the queen will be taken to India's oldest church and a historic Jewish synagogue.

The queen, who visited India in 1961 and 1983, is the second ruling British monarch to come to the country after King George V. King Edward VIII came here when he was Prince of Wales and Prince Charles has also visited India.

Prince Philip, who has paid several visits to India, will follow a different itinerary midway through the trip and go to the western city of Ahmedabad and Bombay, India's film capital and commercial hub.

British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook will join the queen's entourage after a short break in London. He had accompanied her to Pakistan.

India's emotional links with Britain have weakened but Britain still retains some clout as a business partner. It is the second largest direct foreign investor in India, with investments totalling \$713 million in 1997. But it is way behind the United States with investments of \$1.6 billion.

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Acapulco devastated as Pauline's death toll estimated at 400

ACAPULCO, Mexico (AFP) — The poor living in shantytowns in Acapulco, one of Mexico's richest resorts, suffered the most from hurricane Pauline, with the Red Cross estimating the death toll at 400.

Government officials said 144 were confirmed dead in Guerrero state — including 122 in Acapulco — and an additional 58 bodies had been found in adjacent Oaxaca state.

But in Mexico City, Mexican Red Cross President Jose Barroso, was more pessimistic. "The figures that we have are that about 400 people have died," he said.

Acapulco took a direct hit Thursday when Pauline struck, packing winds of up to 190 kilometres per hour. And the flimsy homes far from Acapulco's four-star hotels could not stand up to

the wind, rain and floods. "All the victims came from poor areas," said Juan Betancurt, a doctor tallying the bodies brought into the morgue. "We think the death toll in Acapulco will end up being higher than 150 because we've been finding bodies beneath the rubble."

Sixty per cent of hotels suffered significant damage, officials said, but no tourists were reported among the casualties.

Telephone services, electricity and drinking water were still unavailable in much of Acapulco, Communications and Transport Minister Jorge Sacristan told local radio, although Acapulco's airport had reopened.

President Ernesto Zedillo cut short a state visit to Germany to return to Mexico to oversee clean-up

operations. The killer storm left thousands homeless. Most of the victims were from the city's precarious shantytowns, and their few, precious possessions were scattered on city streets buried in mud or floating in ankle-deep water.

The rain and mud brought the detritus of the shantytowns — clothes, toys, dogs, pigs and cows — flowing down into the glitzy resort area.

Shantytown residents complained the government was late in providing emergency aid. "We're alone and have had no aid — the authorities should be here," said a poor woman from a shantytown called Renacimiento, or Rebirth.

The scene was grim at the city morgue, where family members came looking to

see if the bodies of their loved ones had been recovered. "I'm looking for a cousin and a nephew. The water took them away and I don't know where they're going to appear," Teodoro Rodriguez said, sobbing.

In Mexico City, thousands responded to calls from the news media to collect donations for the hurricane victims. Crowds showed up at the several Red Cross collection centres to donate everything from canned food and bottled water to blankets. Several airlines have offered to move the items to the hurricane areas free of charge.

In the United States, the Mexican embassy and consulates across the country will be open over the weekend to receive donations for hurricane victims.

After touring Acapulco

Friday, the Mexican health minister warned of possible outbreaks of disease in the hurricane's wake, including malaria and cholera.

There were an estimated 4,000 people staying in 28 shelters, although officials said the number of homeless families was much higher.

Friday special army teams arrived with equipment to clear roads of mud and debris. Impassable roads have hampered rescue efforts and aid distribution.

Acapulco, with a population of 500,000, is Mexico's oldest tourist resort. Pauline was downgraded to a tropical depression Friday, and was moving through the central state of Michoacan, with winds gusting up to 75 kilometres per hour.

74 feared dead in Argentine DC-9 crash in Uruguay

MONTEVIDEO (AFP) — All 74 people on board an Argentine DC-9 that crashed in western Uruguay most likely died in the accident, according to rescue workers who reached the wreckage early Saturday.

Rescue teams found the wreckage of the twin-engine airliner which crashed late Friday in a swampy, hilly area outside the town of Fray Bentos at around 5:00 a.m. (0800 GMT) Saturday.

The wreckage is spread over a vast area of rough terrain. One of the largest plane parts found is a wing, which fell onto a secondary road in the area.

An unusually violent storm that affected the area may have caused the aircraft — operated by Austral Airlines — to plummet to earth, Argentine airport officials said.

Sixty-nine passengers, including three infants, and five crew members were on board, airline officials said. The passengers and crew were all either from Argentina or Paraguay, airline officials said.

Martin Sorondo, the head of public health of the province of Rio Negro, where the plane was found, told reporters that the likelihood of survivors was very low.

Search teams, which began to operate in the pre-dawn hours of Saturday morning, were hampered by continuing heavy rain.

Argentine Air Force Secretary General Juan Manuel Vasquez said that Austral Flight 2553 vanished from the radar screens at Montevideo and Buenos Aires airports at 10:23 p.m. Friday (01:23 GMT Saturday).

The Argentine aeroplane, which flew regularly between the northern Argentine city of Posadas and Buenos Aires, was scheduled to arrive at 10:44 p.m. (01:44 GMT Saturday) at the Aeroparque, the Buenos Aires Airport for Internal Flights.

Gen. Vasquez said that the pilot and crew made a one-hour detour over Uruguay to avoid the bad weather.

During the controllers' final radio contact with the aeroplane the pilots reported nothing unusual, Mr. Vasquez said.

The wreckage was found hours later outside Fray Bentos, some 160 kilometres north of Buenos Aires. Scores of firefighters



Relatives of passengers await news at the airport in Buenos Aires, after an Austral Airlines jet plane crashed with 71 passengers aboard (Reuter photo)

police officers and emergency medical workers rushed to the site. One witness said he saw "a large red ball streaking across the sky" just before the crash.

Others reported seeing the aeroplane engulfed in flames as it lost speed and fell to earth.

"I saw an enormous fireball that fell behind a hill, and then there was an impressive explosion and a flash," Gonzalo Bastos, a terrified local, told a television station.

In Montevideo, Uruguayan air force officials said they believed the plane crashed because it gained excessive weight after ice formed on the fuselage.

If the death toll is confirmed it would be the deadliest airline accident in Uruguayan history.

In Argentina, officials opened an emergency information service for relatives of the passengers and crew at the Aeroparque airport.

Search teams find missing bodies from Sumatra helicopter crash

JAKARTA (AFP) — Search teams in southern Sumatra have found the bodies of two missing passengers from a police helicopter which crashed in thick smog Wednesday, bringing the death toll to three.

"The bodies of co-pilot Lieutenant Eko and passenger Murod were found floating in a river," South Sumatra police officer Colonel Ivan Sihombing told the Antara news agency Saturday.

A flight mechanic was the only one of four people on board the helicopter to survive.

He was rescued from a river estuary by a fisherman after drifting for at least six hours after the crash.

The helicopter went missing Wednesday on a flight from Batam Island, south of Singapore, for Palembang, the main town of South Sumatra.

Search teams found the wreckage in a swampy area on Thursday. The survivor told his rescuers the helicopter hit a tree when visibility was just a few metres as the area was blanketed by thick

smoke and fog. South Sumatra, along with Jambi and Riau are the three Indonesian provinces on Sumatra hardest hit by the thick acid haze from widespread forest and ground fires on the island and in Borneo.

An Airbus A-300B4 of the national carrier Garuda Indonesia crashed in a smog hit area in North Sumatra on Sept. 26 as it was approaching the provincial capital of Medan.

All 234 people on board were killed.

The judge's gesture will be the main political snub for the U.S. president, the daily Correr Braziliense said. No one was available at the SFT on Saturday to confirm the report, which also appeared in several other newspapers.

Many Brazilians, who are traditionally sensitive to criticism from abroad, were outraged last week when a newspaper published excerpts of a report drawn up by the U.S. State Department which described corruption in Brazil as "endemic".

The report also criticised the justice system as inefficient and said the country's complicated multi-party political system lacked "ideological coherence".

Mr. Mello was one of the first senior officials to respond, saying the U.S. had no right to make such "simple" statements.

The U.S. embassy in Brasilia, which fuelled local anger by at first defending the report, announced that it would rewrite the passage relating to corrup-

tion, removing the word "endemic". There has also been widespread criticism in the Brazilian media of security measures taken by the U.S. to protect Mr. Clinton during his Oct. 13-15 stay.

Newspapers said Brazilian police had reluctantly agreed to allow U.S. Secret Service agents to use semi-automatic assault rifles when the president visits a Shantytown in Rio de Janeiro that is home to some heavily armed drug gangs.

But officials had refused to stop subway trains from passing along a track next to the sports centre where Mr. Clinton is due to meet residents of the Mangueira slum, including its famous Samba composers and singers.

A cartoon in the Folha de Sao Paulo newspaper depicted Brazilian President Fernando Henrique Cardoso being frisked by a special agent while other dark-suited security officials' rummaged through his office.

Not everyone in Brazil agrees that the U.S. has been heavy-handed in the preparations for Mr. Clinton's visit.

"It is logical [Clinton] should want to guarantee his personal safety," given that in this third world country people have a habit of dying from stray bullets fired from who knows where," wrote respected columnist Fernando Rodrigues in Folha de Sao Paulo.

"They have drawn up a document saying that corruption in Brazil is endemic. Is that wrong? No, it is absolutely right," said Mr. Rodrigues.

Washington state governor Gary Locke Saturday returned to Hong Kong after paying an emotional visit to his ancestral home here for the first time.

Brazil judge said to snub Clinton during visit

BRASILIA (R) — There was more fallout on Saturday from a diplomatic tiff between the United States and Brazil, with reports that the head of Brazil's supreme court planned to snub President Bill Clinton on his visit next week.

Newspapers said Cels De Mello — president of the Supreme Federal Tribunal (SFT) — would leave the capital Brasilia rather than attend a state banquet in honour of Mr. Clinton, who is due to begin a three-day trip to Brazil on Monday.

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Washington state governor in nostalgic return to ancestral home in Hong Kong

JILONG (AFP) — Washington State Governor Gary Locke Saturday returned to Hong Kong after paying an emotional visit to his ancestral home here for the first time.

Some 1,000 uniformed schoolchildren had lined the road to the small fish and rice farming village of Jilong, shouting "warm welcome" in English and playing musical instruments.

Mr. Locke and wife Mona stood through the sunroof of their limousine to wave back as they drove from the nearby city of Taishan, on the banks of the Pearl River in southern China.

"I was just completely overwhelmed by the thousands of people that were there, all the kids that were lining up along the road in the very bright colourful uniforms. I never expected anything like that. It's so totally overwhelming," he said on the journey back.

"I think a great number of the people in China are living under very tough conditions," he said.

"You could see that as we were driving the streets, and you could look into the shops and you could see all the different buildings where people live. We were going into, I think, areas of a typical China."

But he said the area had been specially cleaned for his visit. "It was all cleaned up for us, but you can imagine under normal living circumstances, normal daily life, they [the streets] are filled

with garbage and human waste. They don't have running water, they have a well. They don't even have flush toilets. These are the buildings in which my father and grandfather were born. Not much has changed."

"I sat in a chair in a room where my father was born, where he grew up and I just sat there and I was very quiet. I said 'hey, this is the place where he was born, where he was raised up like in 1916.' I got a strong nostalgic feeling."

More than 1,000 residents and officials had gathered in the village to greet Mr. Locke, the first Chinese state governor in the United States, as lion dancers performed.

"It's hard to imagine anyone living here," Mr. Locke said earlier after meeting some 70 members of his traditional clan in the house which hosted his parents' wedding banquet.

"It's like we are back in the 1800s," he said of the simple two-storey building, which was the same as tens of thousands of others across the region.

"The amazing thing is they are still living here today," added his American-born Chinese wife.

Trilled by some 300 cheerful villagers from Jilong and surrounding hamlets, he then went on to a house built by his great-grandfather before paying respects at the man's grave.

Mr. Locke's grandfather went to the U.S. early this century to work as a houseboy in Washington state, he said.

Almost half of the 170 villagers here have relatives overseas, officials said, adding the settlement was established in 1715.

"Our villagers have a tradition of going overseas," said one woman, who was prevented from giving her name by Chinese officials.

"Whoever has the capability, he or she will definitely try to go."

"Of course, I came here today to see Gary Locke and his family members. It's a great day for him and for us."

Nine-year-old schoolboy Liu Shiliang added: "I was delighted to have a chance to see him. He's a famous person in Taishan. We're proud of him."

Mr. Locke was earlier given a warm welcome in Taishan city by more schoolchildren and a banner saying, "Welcoming Gary Locke's return to his hometown" at the ferry terminal where the governor, his entourage and some 60 journalists, photographers and cameramen arrived from neighbouring Hong Kong.

Features

Tourists want to feel, not see, the pyramids

By Eileen Alt-Powell
The Associated Press

CAIRO — At night, long after most tourists have left the pyramids, the tombs of Egypt's ancient pharaohs echo with the chanting, dancing and praying of travellers seeking a touch of the psychic.

They are coming in increasing numbers — often carrying oils to anoint themselves or crystals to measure the spiritual power of the great monuments. They want to feel the pyramids rather than to see them.

"It's a spiritual journey to the source of all original wisdom," said Jill Vander Veen, 48, a calligrapher from Johannesburg, South Africa, after meditating in the burial chamber of the great pyramid.

The granite crypt is at the end of a steep wooden ramp. The air is dank and still. Even a whisper resonates off the stone walls and empty sarcophagus of the Pharaoh Cheops. The darkness is so complete that those centimetres apart can't see each other.

Yet in this void, Ms. Vander Veen and others describe mystical experiences — brilliant flashes of light, strange voices from far away, a sense of supernatural forces moving around them.

These spiritual visitors are the heaviest users of Egypt's "Rent-a-Pyramid" programme, which gives tour groups after-hours access to the pharaonic tombs at a cost of \$600 for three hours.

Some 5,000 people bought time last year, and even more are expected this year. The archaeologists responsible for the great pyramids at the Giza plateau on Cairo's western edge have mixed feelings about the trend.

"People like to dream, and they want to tie their dreams to the most important symbols of the ancient world," says Zahi Hawass, the supervisor at Giza. "We're willing to accommodate that."

But Mr. Hawass and other Egyptologists are disturbed that many of the spiritualists are being drawn by "New Age" theorists who seem bent on rewriting the history of ancient Egypt.

Archaeologists say the Giza pyramids were laboriously built with primitive tools by Egyptian workers for pharaohs Cheops, Chephren and Mykerinus about 4,500 years ago. Some New Agers contend they are far older.

For example, European writers Robert Bauval and Graham Hancock have a theory that the three pyramids line up with the stars in the belt of the constellation Orion as they appeared in the night sky 10,500

years ago.

They postulate that the pyramids are the work of a lost civilisation — which perhaps left its wisdom concealed in the great structures.

"They are trying to steal our history," Mr. Hawass shouts when asked about these theories.

"We have found no evidence of any lost civilisation," he says. "Everything around the pyramids dates it to the 4th dynasty in 2500 B.C. — the pottery, the tombs of the workers, the tools we've found. Everything."

Mr. Hawass and New Age author John Anthony West of Athens, New York, have had bitter exchanges about the ancient monuments on the very modern medium of the Internet.

Mr. West accuses the American-educated archaeologist of blocking research that might challenge traditional scholarship and calls him a scorpion. "Hawass belittles West and his supporters as 'pyramidists'."

Mr. West has a much-disputed theory that the Sphinx at Giza is also far older than believed. He says the weathering of the stones was not due to wind and sand, but to heavy rain and floods the likes of which haven't hit the Egyptian desert since about 9000 B.C.

An organiser of meditation sessions in the pyramids, Mr. West says his followers find in Egypt "the source of unparalleled art and architecture generated by a profound and sacred science we are only just beginning to understand."

The modern-day spiritualists are following in the footsteps of people drawn for centuries by the power of Egypt's ancient religion, with its intriguing gods and promise of a rich afterlife.

Astrologists have tried to depict the great pyramids' shafts and tunnels as guides to the stars. Mathematicians have developed sophisticated "maps" of the world based on the monuments.

Rainer Stadelmann, head of the German Archaeological Institute in Cairo, sees the new theories as "just more pseudo-science" echoing old ideas.

"It comes like a flu," he said, "and after 10 years, goes away."

Tour guide Mohammad Abdel-Razak doesn't get excited about how New Agers view Egypt, even those who think they once lived as Cleopatra, the Pharaoh Ramesses II, temple priestesses — even ancient gods.

"They love Egypt, they come and they spend money," he says. "Why shouldn't we be nice to them?"

Samuelson's argument still holds true

By Jonathan Davis

TIME PASSES and the caravan of luminaries in the world of finance and economics moves on with it. How widely, I wonder, does the name of Paul Samuelson still resonate among those under the age of 35? This wise and feisty man, once described with feeling by a contemporary as "a human mainframe," has good claim, along with his great rival, Milton Friedman, to have been the most influential economist of the post-war period.

In a career that has left virtually no corner of economics untouched, he was the man who first took the philosophies of Keynes and propagated them far and wide across the world. He was the first American economist to win the Nobel Prize for economics and wrote what proved to be the standard textbook on economics for a whole generation of students.

Samuelson's work has covered so many different subjects — his collected works run to six volumes and more than 400 academic papers — that it is easy to overlook his contribution in specific fields.

As it happens, one of the areas where he has had the greatest influence is in investment. As an admirer of Keynes, who was a noted speculator as well as a professional economist, he was one of the first economists to try and understand why markets should behave in the way that they do. A paper he wrote in the 1960s, dryly entitled "Proof That Properly Anticipated Prices Fluctuate Randomly," was the basis of what has since come to be known as the concept of efficient markets.

This is the notion that competition is such in large and well capitalised stock markets that it is difficult for anyone, even professional investors, to make consistent excess returns from them, excess returns in this context meaning higher returns than the market averages, after allowing for the different degrees of risk adopted. He later summed up his philosophy as "no easy pickings, no sure thing gains."

When Samuelson first propounded this potentially radical idea, it was greeted with astonishment, bordering on outrage, on Wall Street, which was hardly a surprise when you begin to think through the implications. Never one to want to avoid making waves if the opportunity arose, Samuelson himself con-



Paul Samuelson

cluded in a 1974 article that the best thing most professional fund managers could do was to pack their bags and go home. But, as a pragmatist, who like Keynes has always liked to dabble in the markets himself, he also had some serious advice for ordinary investors.

This was that the best thing they could do, once they had decided to invest in equities in the first place, was to put the bulk of their money into a low-cost index-tracking fund. He has long been a fan of the Vanguard Group, a fund management company which sells exactly such index-tracking funds to millions of American investors and has compiled a consistent above-average performance.

The line of reasoning is an argument which I believe holds as broadly true today in general as it did when Samuelson first pro-

pounded it. It does not mean, as Jason Hathorn, a director of the specialist fund management group Buchanan Partners has kindly pointed out to me, that there are a number of ways in which investors cannot still hope to add value by adding a slice of active management on top of their basic indexed portfolio.

One of the arguments for investing in a professionally managed European or emerging markets fund, for example, is that there are good grounds for believing that other markets are not yet as efficient as the U.K. and United States and therefore that it will still be possible to find profitable pricing anomalies there.

Like Barclays Global Investors, Buchanan Partners believes that it is possible to use quantitative stock selection methods to exploit specific areas of inefficiency in the U.K.

market. Their track record to date suggests that they may well be right, although how long these particular anomalies will persist is something which is by definition unknowable.

Samuelson would not disagree. In two recent articles for the Journal of Portfolio Management, he looked back on the 30 or so years of research that has been carried out since he first started developing the efficient markets hypothesis. His conclusion is that, while many individual anomalies have been shown to exist, the "jury of history" has failed to find "systematic inefficiency that exercisers of judgement could use to achieve excess risk-corrected returns." In other words, nobody has yet succeeded in disproving the basic thrust of the efficient markets concept.

Note that Samuelson's argument now, as before, is not that it is impossible for some professional fund managers to achieve excess returns. He explicitly allows the possibility that a handful of exceptionally talented individuals, such as Warren Buffett, can outperform the market on a consistent basis, though most will not, partly because they tend to trade too much and fritter away some of their gains in high dealing costs.

His case has always been that such exceptional investing talents will normally use their talent to make money for themselves, rather than rent themselves out to others; and that it is difficult and/or expensive for ordinary investors to take advantage of such talents even if they are able to identify them.

One thing that tends to happen, for example, is that most of the excess returns that the good managers achieve are simply absorbed by the higher fees that the managers with the best records are able to charge. This is one reason why the unit trusts with the best performance records tend also to be the ones with the highest initial charges and often the highest annual charges as well. As an ordinary investor, you pay for what you get, but what you get, quite often, once you total up the costs, is not worth paying for, compared with what you get from indexing.

The Independent

That serpent of old Nile

Book Review

The Memoirs of Cleopatra
By Margaret George
St. Martin's, 964pp. \$27.95

THREE CENTURIES ago, Blaise Pascal suggested that if Cleopatra's nose had been shorter, the whole face of the world would now be different. More recently, various Afrocentric groups have presumptuously tried to claim that Cleopatra was in fact a black woman — ridiculous; her family was originally Macedonian Greek.

The reader is bound to find the early pages of this novel somewhat confusing. Because of the paucity of family and given names at that time, there are some half-a-dozen female Cleopatras and male Ptolemies for us to sort out, as they engage in palace intrigues, conspiracies and cabals. However, as the extraneous ones gradually get disposed of by one means or another, "our" Cleopatra eventually comes to the fore, and the bulk of the story is hers.

A thrilling story it is, and we develop considerable sympathy for her successes, trials and tribulations, but I can't say that she ever becomes really lovable. George seems to have been at least subtly influenced by Elizabeth Taylor's portrayal of the character — beautiful, artful, ambitious, by turns flirtatious minx, temptress, seductress, murderess, competent queen, towering intellect (at one point, she learns to read and speak Latin fluently in a month; I would call that impossible) but unfortunately with not a trace of a sense of humour.

Though Cleopatra is technically — in the Egyptian tradition — "married" to one and another of her Ptolemy brothers, she saves her virginity for Julius Caesar — albeit he is 52 years old, balding, epileptic and has innumerable other "alternative wives," not to mention his genuine and long-suffering spouse, Calpurnia. Caesar is clearly the one true love of Cleopatra's life and, for us readers, the most engaging character in the novel. As well he should be; he gave Rome an empire that extended from Britain through Gaul, Spain, Italy, Greece, Cyprus and Crete to the shores of the Levant. His writings were famous in their time and are still widely quoted. He gave the Western world its first really workable calendar. After his death, the Romans elevated him to godhood and renamed one of their months for him.

George adheres to some of the old legends — Cleopatra introducing herself to the otherwise unapproachable Caesar by rolling herself inside a gift carpet, her bathing in asses' milk — and even makes them more believable. The author also has the courage to correct some other old legends. Towards the end of the novel, Cleopatra does not wanly and vaporishly commit suicide by clapping an asp to her bosom. Instead, she realistically employs the far more lethal royal hooded cobra.

Anyway, Caesar is immediately smitten with her and whisks her off to Rome for a two-year stay as his acknowledged mistress. His subjects have never seemed to mind his other peccadilloes, but they mightily resent Cleopatra. She is "foreign," so she is shunned by both high society and the common folk, forced to live rather forlornly, ignored in one of Caesar's villas. On her arrival at Rome — and Rome at that period was a boondocks compared to her own urbane and sophisticated Alexandria —



ILLUSTRATION BY JILL KARLA SCHWARTZ

Caesar takes her on a tour of the place: Old and New Forums, the Circus Maximus, temples to this and that god.

Whenever Cleopatra is logistically able to be "on the scene," so to speak, the author does an admirable job of evoking the place, the times, the local life: chariot races, gladiatorial contests, triumphal parades, voluptuous feasts and the like. However, Cleopatra can seldom accompany Caesar or her own generals on their many wars and campaigns of conquest, so these must be pallidly conveyed to her (and us) by way of conversations, gossip, dispatches and letters. Even Caesar's assassination has to be handled the same way (no "Et tu, Brute!").

Because many of the wars, civil wars and provincial uprisings employ the age-old military "hurry up and wait" technique, there are fallow patches where the opponents may sit simply glowering at each other for a year or so. But George superbly unearths, recreates or invents anecdotes, dialogues and adventures to fill in the gaps. Still, we do not get to experience the day-to-day horror of warfare until the culminating (and Egypt-crushing) four-month Battle of Actium, when Cleopatra insists on being at least a figurehead commander and sails there in her famous

flagship: gilded inside and out, purple-sailed, silver-oared, festooned with fancy lanterns.

The author's research is awesome; she seems to know every detail of the foods, costumes and customs of Egypt, Rome and their colonies. She even includes a plausible explanation of the Jews' much earlier "parting of the waters" of the Reed (not Red) Sea. She does, however, sometimes fudge on details we might like to know more about. People are forever lighting oil lamps in dark rooms or torches in dark streets, as casually as if they were flicking their Bics. How did they do it? Curiously, too, for all her notorious love life, Cleopatra's memoirs are prissily modest and not at all titillating about her sexual encounters. He "made love to me" is about as sexy as it gets.

The novel fairly weeps with betrayals. Though the ageing Caesar is ecstatic when Cleopatra bears him a son, Caesarion, he never publicly acknowledges the child as his own. And, after Caesar's death, his will makes no mention of or provision for Caesarion. Caesar's whole fortune and the succession to the governance of Rome are bequeathed to his extremely unlikeable nephew Octavian and that one's odious wife, Fulvia. For her part, Cleopatra is

already prepared to find a replacement for Caesar, if necessary. While he still lives and "makes love" to her, she is casting admiring sideways glances at the muscular virility of young Marc Antony.

In the final analysis, whatever the length of her nose, Cleopatra actually had little participation in all the epochal events of those years. They simply happen to have happened during her lifetime, and her chief distinction was being the focus of the Romans' hatred, for her having "unmanned" (or certainly "unRomaned") first Caesar, then Antony. Caesar's own death, not hers, was far more significant in changing "the whole face of the world." All that her suicide accomplished was an end to the Ptolemaic dynasty and the diminution of Egypt from a world power and cultural centre to the status of a mere "breadbasket" province of Rome. Yet it is she, dead at 39, still beautiful, who has most entranced us down all the centuries since. Her "memoirs" are vivid and enthralling. Read them.

Gary Jennings
The Washington Post

Regulations concerning issuing, registering securities to be enforced from Thursday

Hafez predicts Kingdom to register 5% growth in '97

AMMAN (Peira) — Jordan's debts to other countries and financial institutions now stand at around \$6.5 billion but the Kingdom's financial situation is quite sound, Finance Minister Suleiman Hafez announced Saturday.

Speaking to the media following a regular Cabinet session, Mr. Hafez said the soundness of the economy reflects the fact that the Kingdom is applying the economic restructuring programme agreed with the International Monetary Fund in a very precise manner.

As a result of the careful implementation of the

reform programme, the minister predicted this year's economic growth to be around five per cent and the budget deficit to be at 3.1 per cent.

The implementation of the economic restructuring programme which started in 1989 will end in 1998 but that does not mean that the government will stop addressing imbalances in the national economy, Mr. Hafez stressed.

Mr. Hafez said the Cabinet reviewed the country's financial policy and its impact on the preparation of the 1998 fiscal budget. He indicated that the draft bud-

get will be ready next week and will be referred to the Council of Ministers for approval.

Referring to the privatisation process, he said the government has finalised a mechanism for the privatisation of the Jordan Telecommunications Company and that shares of the company will be offered to the public before the end of this year.

Also before the end of this year, 23 per cent of the government's shares in the Jordan Cement Factories Company will be sold to the private sector, added the minister. He revealed that the government has disposed of



JSC Chairman Marto (centre) addressing the press conference

all its shares in companies where its equity did not exceed five per cent.

Meanwhile, Michel Marto, chairman of the Jordan Securities Commission

(JSC) announced Saturday that regulations concerning issuing and registering securities will be enforced as of Oct. 16. He told a press conference that these regulations

organise all matters regarding Jordan's capital market. The regulations provide details about issuing securities under the supervision of the JSC.

Asian economist warns currency crisis could last two years

HONG KONG (AFP) — The currency crisis which has rocked South East Asia for the past months could last for up to two years and even get worse, a senior Hong Kong-based banker has warned.

William Overholt, Asian research director with Bankers Trust Company in Hong Kong, said the region was experiencing a "bubbles crisis."

"Japan was the first to go through it, Thailand has a huge real estate crisis, Korea a chaebol (industrial conglomerates) bubble, Indonesia an industry bubble and everywhere there is a banking bubble," he said.

"The problem is going to be a lot bigger, reality is just sinking in... the speculation will come back and back and back until the bubbles are gone," he added.

Mr. Overholt predicted it may take 18 months to two years for governments to put in place measures to tempt back investors and enable the situation to stabilise.

But he warned the crisis

could last even longer if those countries affected did not learn from the example of Japan which "tried to postpone the pain and ended prolonging the problem... Japan still has a problem, seven years after."

What was needed was American-style management such as seen in the U.S. savings banks crisis in the 1980s when "assets have been marked to market, banks went down, owners and managers lost their jobs and their money."

"The pain was awful but the crisis was over and the U.S. economy never stopped growing ever since," he said.

Last week, the battered Malaysian ringgit staged a stunning recovery and the Indonesian rupiah also treaded higher but analysts warned the upside was limited as factors stoking regional foreign exchange turmoil persisted.

The Thai baht, however, closed lower as investors were sidelined ahead of a government announcement on Thailand's ailing

financial sector while the Philippine central bank directly intervened in the market to check a peso fall.

Mr. Overholt who is also an specialist in Chinese affairs said he was more optimistic about developments in China, Hong Kong and Taiwan.

"The Chinese got a big bubble that is called the SOEs (state-owned enterprises) and a banking bubble," he said, adding that China's economic czar Zhu Rongji, tipped as future premier, had succeeded in only a few years in bringing down inflation from 22 per cent to just two.

Hong Kong remained vulnerable though because of property speculation.

"This property bubble is going to be deflated, if not by foreign speculators, then by local people getting angry," he said.

"There is going to be real social pain, it will affect people's willingness to buy property, it will lower the prices and affect the stock market," he added.

Gulf states, EU make headway in drawing up free trade pact

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Arab Gulf states and the European Union (EU), their main economic partner, have made headway on a planned free trade zone and an agreement could be initiated in 1998, officials have said.

The two sides ironed out most of their differences at two rounds of negotiations this year and agreed to hold three more rounds in 1998, the official United Arab Emirates (UAE) said.

It reported unidentified Gulf officials as saying progress was achieved after the six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states edged closer to setting up a customs union, a prerequisite set by the EU for their free trade pact.

"At their talks in Riyadh, the GCC and the EU delegates discussed the draft free trade agreement and the EU agreed on most modifications sought by the GCC," it said.

"Preparations will be discussed this year for three new rounds of talks between the two sides in 1998 as they agreed to ink that accord

next year," Al Bayan added. Sources at the Riyadh-based GCC said the two partners had removed more than 80 per cent of the hurdles blocking a free trade agreement, under discussion for more than 10 years.

Such issues as more EU investment in the Gulf, the environment and customs tariffs will be settled at the coming talks.

"There is large progress in our negotiations for a free trade accord. We have presented a report to the EU about the progress that we have made in our efforts to unify customs tariffs in the GCC," one source told AFP.

"The EU has responded favourably to our clarifications but stressed again that we should bridge all gaps in our tariffs. I think the customs union project will be ready this year and will be presented to the EU," he said.

The EU has repeatedly told GCC countries they must unify their widely varied tariffs before it signs the free trade pact, which the GCC has sought in a bid to boost exports to the EU and attract industrial technology.

GCC states, which control nearly 45 per cent of the world's recoverable oil reserves, argue such a pact is justified because they do not impose tariffs on most EU products and want reciprocal treatment.

But the EU has voiced fears that removal of duties on Gulf petrochemicals and other exports altogether could result in dumping European markets with cheap products and threaten the EU's independent petrochemical industry.

The two sides agreed in 1994 on a gradual removal of the tariffs but the EU said more negotiations were needed before a pact is finalised.

The absence of a free trade agreement has combined with lower oil prices and a sharp rise in EU exports to the Gulf to upset the trade balance between the two sides.

From a large surplus in favour of the GCC in the early 1980s, the balance sharply tilted in favour of the EU, which had a surplus in the trade of goods and services of around \$10.9 billion in 1995.

HOROSCOPE

By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

FORECAST FOR SUNDAY, OCTOBER 12, 1997

ARIES

(March 21 to April 19) It is a good day to contact friends and relatives and discuss plans with them. If you have a trip will be wise, plan it at this time. Later this evening will be good for going out on the town with your mate.

TAURUS

(April 20 to May 20) Make business plans early today, completing a new project. Later this evening have a talk with your mate which you have been postponing. Stop postponing with your career activities and thereby you can be successful.

GEMINI

(May 21 to June 21) Keep your associations productive today by stating your aims clearly to a bigwig who can be quite helpful. Keep contact with those who are of greatest help to you and thereby you can gain the recognition you seek.

MOON CHILDREN

(June 22 to July 21) You can spend time today labouring instead of devising methods of operation for your career activities. Stay busy, this evening and make the most of the cooperative spirit which prevails with you and your loved ones.

LEO

(July 22 to August 21) Focus on utilising talents, so that today plans should be put to work. Try to improve your health, thereby you won't miss and time from career activities. Show affection to others who have made a difference in your life.

VIRGO

(August 22 to September 22) Get busy early today realising promises made to your loved ones on previous days. Later this will be a good time to spend time relaxing with charming, helpful friends who can make your career activities more successful.

LIBRA

(September 23 to October 22) Send out many messages today, and you should not let friends forget you. Also labour on papers and reports and verify their accuracy. You should not stay alone tonight, so make plans to meet with fellow associates.

SCORPIO

(October 23 to November 21) Use your astute sense this week to keep watch on financial affairs, and gain advantageous position. Watch those whom you consider successful and pattern your actions, thereby you can gain the prosperity which you seek.

SAGITTARIUS

(November 22 to December 21) Today, throw your uncommonly high energy into business and meet with knowledgeable people who have some excellent suggestions. Concentrate on honest methods of operation. Take good care of health concerns.

CAPRICORN

(December 22 to January 20) Be assertive with higher-ups, and don't be afraid to communicate with them. Try to be more attentive to your mate later this evening and show him or her the attention which he or she seeks and can bring you great results.

AQUARIUS

(January 21 to February 19) Today you will receive some well-deserved recognition from friends and fellow associates. Get together for a party later this evening and invite many people, you should be the perfect host towards all these people.

PISCES

(February 20 to March 20) Today there is potential to meet powerful individuals who can be quite helpful if you use tact and diplomacy. Later this evening you can handle credit matters carefully and thereby you can gain the recognition from superiors.

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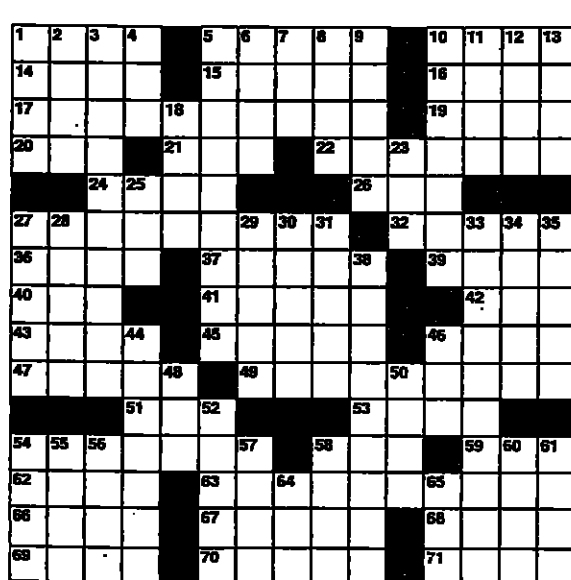
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THE Daily Crossword

- ACROSS
1 Biblical weed
5 Small map
10 Mitten rock
14 Racecourse
15 — Dame
16 Sere
17 NASA fliers
19 Example
20 Sign
21 State, abbr.
22 Flashing lights
24 Always
26 Over there
27 Fletcher
Christian, et al.
32 Dries
36 Article
37 Indolence
39 Ringlet
40 Ascot
41 Shiribone
42 — bono
43 Beige
45 Task
46 Predicament
47 Files
48 Orville and Wilbur
51 Kit
53 Coming
54 Unskillful
58 Haggard novel
59 Helioic letter
62 Lulu
entertainment
63 Martin and Damone
66 Winglike
67 Charged particle
68 Make ready, briefly
69 Defeat
70 Mount
71 Inquires

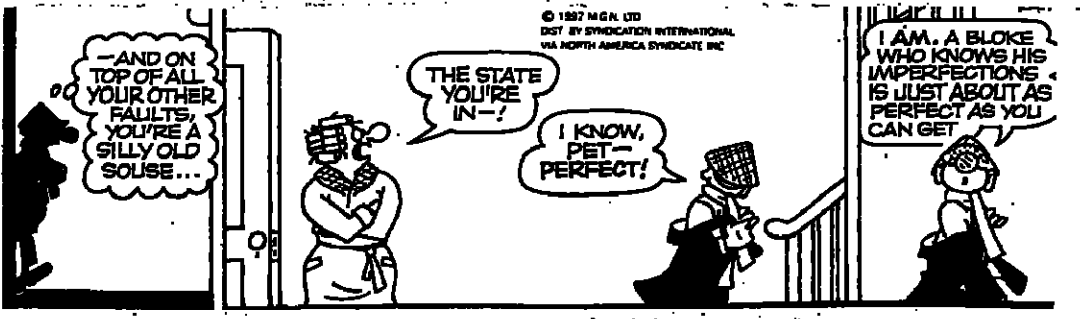


- DOWN
1 Convex moldings
2 English river
3 Some criminals
4 Wapiti
5 Holds the attention
6 Carol
7 Sault — Marie
8 Goes astray
9 Cross
10 Sparring of words
11 Sault
12 Clamp
13 Coolers
18 Eyskum
23 Brawl
25 Get-up-and-go
27 Joint
28 New York city
29 Choice
30 Songbird
31 Smart
33 Marionette manipulators
34 Slip
35 Coin collectors
38 Humbly
44 Snip
46 Gender
48 Spot
50 Indigence
52 Band
53 Instruments
54 Melville captain
55 Stubborn one
56 Too bad!
57 Rail
58 Plum
60 Journey
61 Vipers
64 Rest
65 Govt. gp.

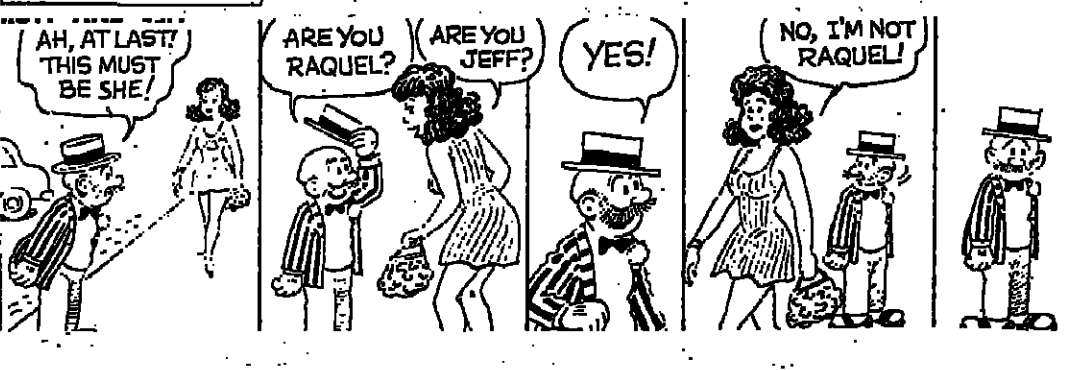
Peanuts



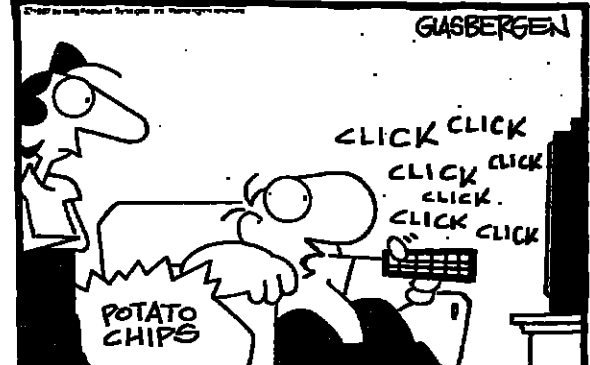
Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



THE BETTER HALF. By Glasbergen



"When I'm quiet, you complain that I never talk to you. When I talk, you call me a poor listener!"

JUMBLE. THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

SWENY
ALCAN
REMROY
CATATH

Answer here: _____

Yesterday's Jumbles: COWER SUITE BOILED SKEWER
Answer: What the author ended up with when he played football — WRITER'S BLOCK

REUTERS

The Business of...

Major Companies & Closes...

Energy

Major Companies & Closes...

Energy

Major Companies & Closes...

Energy

Major Companies & Closes...

Energy

Major Companies & Closes...

Energy

Major Companies & Closes...

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Major Companies & Closes...

Energy

Major Companies & Closes...

Energy

Major Companies & Closes...

Energy

Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic

Ministry begins paying cash subsidy for wheat to beneficiaries from the private sector

****STARTING TODAY (Sunday),** the Ministry of Finance will begin handing the fifth payment of cash subsidy for wheat which costs the treasury around JD51 million a year. The payments will cover the last five months of this year and will be given to private sector beneficiaries who can receive the cash subsidy from 750 centres spread throughout the Kingdom.

The payment will be JD1.280 per month for each person and will cover the months of August until the end of the year, the minister of finance said noting that the cash distribution process will continue for a whole month. Replying to questions from journalists during a tour of the centre carrying out checking procedures, the minister emphasised the need to merge all the parties concerned with paying the subsidies. He said the Ministry of Finance will study a plan, in cooperation with the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Supply, to formulate a clear joint approach on merging the parties concerned with paying cash subsidies.

The minister stressed that the government is continuing to implement the mechanism of pay-

ing the cash subsidies for the citizens without any exceptions or changes on this mechanism. He explained that the names of beneficiaries registered were those mentioned on the payment lists which were printed earlier at the Ministry of Finance. The lists, which were sent to payment centres (branch of a bank or a post office), include the full name, the national code number, the number of beneficiaries and the amount of cash subsidy that should be paid.

The lists were prepared at the highest level of accuracy, the minister said, adding that the centres will be operating daily from 7:30 a.m. until 5 p.m. every day except Thursday afternoon. "The distribution centres have raised their preparedness to the 'A' level, which is the highest degree of alertness," the minister said. He added that the centres were equipped with telephone and facsimile lines to respond to any complaint or problem facing the public. "A decision has been taken to answer any query within five minutes from receiving it," he stressed (Al-Dustour + Al-Rai + Al-Aswak).

China seeks to widen economic, business relations with Jordan

AMMAN (Petra) — A delegation representing the Chinese International Trade Board Saturday held talks with Jordanian officials and businessmen and said China wishes to develop its economic relations with Jordan to be at par with the excellent ties on the political level.

Delegation leader Kio Yushan told Jordanian officials from the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Supply, and members from the Federation of Jordanian Chambers of Commerce and the Jordanian Businessmen Association (JBA) that the Chinese delegation is exploring opportunities for investment in order to bolster economic and business ties, especially in industry, tourism and transport sectors.

"Through this visit, we try to explore all scopes for wide cooperation between our two countries and to meet with businessmen as well as try to solve trade-related problems and the delay in the arrival of goods," Mr. Yushan said.

The Chinese delegation outlined the developments in the Chinese economy over the past few years noting that China has adopted the open market economy. He indicated that the Arab-Chinese Chamber of Commerce will hold a general conference in Amman next year in order to explore wider scopes of Sino-Arab economic cooperation.

The ministry's secretary general, Mohammad Halaj, outlined the areas where investment can be made and the incentives and privileges offered to the investors who can acquire up to 100 per cent of projects.

He explained the government's policy of privatising institutions pointing out that the private sector is given the leading role in the national economy.

He also outlined that Jordan is planning to carry out projects in railways, water, tourism and mineral sectors.

Federation Chairman Haidar Murad invited Chinese businessmen to invest in the country and to carry out joint ventures.

JBA President Hamdi Tabbaa pointed out that Jordan's exports to China have been declining while Chinese exports to Jordan are increasing.

He called on the Chinese to take steps to adjust the balance of trade between the two countries through increased purchases from Jordan, especially phosphate, potash, fertilisers and medicines, to Chinese markets.

According to Mr. Tabbaa, Jordanian exports to China dropped from JD7 million in 1993 to JD7 million in 1996 while China's exports to the Kingdom rose from JD38 million in 1992 to JD51 million in 1996.

Mr. Tabbaa announced that a JBA delegation will visit China in the coming year to explore new markets for Jordanian products and to look for joint investment opportunities.

He said that the JBA wishes to establish a China-Jordan business council in order to promote economic and trade links with China.

Lebanese businessmen in Baghdad to open trade fair

BAGHDAD (R) — A large delegation of Lebanese businessmen and industrialists is in Baghdad seeking trade under Iraq's oil-for-food deal with the United Nations, a government newspaper said Saturday.

Al-Iraq paper said a team of officials representing Lebanese ministries of industry, agriculture, economy and tourism was conducting talks with Iraqi counterparts on means to expand trade between the two countries.

The paper said the team of Lebanese officials was joined Friday by more than 200 Lebanese businessmen who would open a trade fair in Baghdad exhibiting Lebanese products.

The fair will be the first in Baghdad since Beirut severed ties with Iraq in 1994 over the murder of an Iraqi dissident in the Lebanese capital.

Lebanon cut diplomatic relations with Iraq over the assassination of the dissident.

About 100 private Lebanese companies are expected to take part in the exhibition. The organisers, according to Al-Iraq, will sell exhibits including cooking oil, soaps, clothes, detergents, watches and pesticides direct to visitors.

The organisers hope to strike deals with Iraqi traders within the framework of Iraq's oil deal with the United Nations for goods like washing machines, electrical pumps, printing materials as well as medical and veterinary equipment, the paper said.

The deal, which took effect last December, allows Iraq to sell \$2 billion of oil every six months to buy humanitarian goods. Iraqis have been hard-hit by U.N. sanctions imposed for Baghdad's 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

Last week a 12-member Iraqi delegation, headed by the Chairman of Iraq's Chamber of Commerce Adnan Al Qudis was in Lebanon and held meetings with Lebanese officials and visited Lebanese factories.

ARAB BANK EXTENDS AVAILABILITY OF CAPITAL GUARANTEED FUND

ARAB BANK has announced it is to extend the availability of its recently launched Capital Guaranteed Fund in Jordan and Lebanon until 27 October due to heavy demand from investors. The fund, due to close on 13 October, will remain open for an additional two weeks to give investors a further opportunity to participate in the fund. Arab Bank has launched a new Capital Guaranteed Fund across the Middle East, to five investors the opportunity of investing in a fund that guarantees the security of their capital, whilst providing

potentially higher returns than traditional deposit and savings accounts. The new Capital Guaranteed Fund was launched in Jordan and Lebanon on 14 September and will now close on 27 October to coincide with the closure of the second tranche of the fund in UAE, Qatar and Bahrain. Full details of the fund are available through Arab Bank's extensive branch network. In addition, Arab Bank has placed a team of specially trained Investment Executives in major branch locations throughout the Middle East who will provide detailed information on the fund.

The Arab Bank Capital Guaranteed Fund, which requires a minimum investment of U.S.\$5,000, will mature in two years, and provide investors with the opportunity of benefiting in rises in the Nikkei Index, Japan's index of leading shares. Based on its considerable knowledge and experience of the Asian marketplace, Arab Bank believes that the Nikkei currently provides attractive valuation and exciting future growth potential.

REUTERS

REUTERS

The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates									
	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	ITL	FRF	ESP	YEN
US Dollar	1.7505	0.6156	1.4806	120.05	1.3777	1721.01	1.9715	5.9705	
DE Mark	0.5713	1.0000	0.8343	68.57	0.7868	982.87	1.1282	3.5335	
GB Sterling	1.6245	2.8333	1.0000	193.65	2.2381	2795.78	3.2027	9.5366	
CH Franc	0.6847	119.78	0.4211	82.16	0.9427	1177.84	135.38	4.0170	
JP Yen	0.0083	1.4575	0.5124	1.2162	1.1471	14.33	164.15	4.8890	
CA Dollar	0.7258	1.2660	0.8471	1.0585	1.15	1247.48	1.4257	4.2527	
IT Lira	0.0006	1.0165	0.3574	0.0848	1.0801	1.4257	1.145	3.4091	
NL Guilder	0.5072	88.77	0.3121	74.08	0.6988	872.72	1.257	2.769	
FR Franc	0.1703	0.2981	0.1048	24.8719	0.2346	33.57	33.5700		


Middle Eastern Currencies									
	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	ITL	FRF	ESP	YEN
US Dollar	0.7080	3.7505	0.3770	3.6402	0.3038	3.6728	1536.75	3.9590	
Jordan Dinar	1.4124	5.2973	0.5325	5.1415	0.4290	5.1877	2170.35	4.8008	
Saudi Riyal	0.2688	0.1888	0.1005	0.97	0.0810	0.98	409.75	0.9063	
Bahrain Dinar	2.65	1.8780	0.9485	9.86	0.8057	8.74	4076.37	9.0162	
Qatar Dinar	0.2747	0.1945	0.10303	1.0303	0.0834	1.01	422.16	0.9337	
Kuwait Dinar	3.2922	2.3309	1.23473	1.2411	1.198	12.09	5068.28	0.8337	
Emirates Dinar	0.2723	0.1928	0.10211	0.1028	0.0827	1.01	418.40	0.9254	
Lebanese L1000	0.65	0.4807	0.24405	0.2453	0.1977	2.3900	1.22118		
Egyptian	0.2942	0.2083	1.1034	0.1109	1.0710	0.0894	1.0805	452.12	

Mid-East Currencies									
	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	ITL	FRF	ESP	YEN
SA Riyal	0.2688	0.1888	0.1005	0.97	0.0810	0.98	409.75	0.9063	
AE Dirham	0.2723	0.1928	0.10211	0.1028	0.0827	1.01	418.40	0.9254	
KW Dinar	3.2922	2.3309	1.23473	1.2411	1.198	12.09	5068.28	0.8337	
BH Dinar	0.3770	0.2747	0.1945	1.0303	0.0834	1.01	422.16	0.9337	
CY Pound	1.9236	3.3673	1.1838	2.8096	230.928				

JOD Cross Rates									
	Buy	Sell	Buy	Sell	Buy	Sell	Buy	Sell	Buy
US Dollar	0.708	0.710							
GB Sterling	1.1481	1.1538							
DE Mark	0.404	0.406							
CH Franc	0.4849	0.4873							
FR Franc	0.1204	0.121							
JP Yen	0.5888	0.5918							
NL Guilder	0.3586	0.3604							
IT Lira	0.4106	0.4127							

Currency Deposit Rates (Bid)									
	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	ITL	FRF	ESP	YEN
USD	5.54	5.65	5.72	5.83	5.88				
GBP	7.06	7.25	7.30	7.31	7.46				
JPY	0.43	0.50	0.45	0.47	0.51				
DEM	3.32	3.50	3.63	3.62	3.96				
FRF	3.27	3.54	3.65	3.82	3.97				
CHF	1.43	1.56	1.78	1.81	1.93				
ITL	6.74	6.68	6.38	6.12	5.93				

Equity Indices									
	Index	Change	Index	Change	Index	Change	Index	Change	Index
New York	DOW JONES	8045.21	-16.21	-0.2	8098.45	8002.73	8061.42		
New York	S&P 500	956.98	-3.64	-0.38	970.62	963.42	970.62		
London	FT-SE 100	5227.3	9.5	0.18	5227.3	5166.7	5217.8		
Tokyo	NIKKEI 225	17376.92	-242.26	-1.37	17627.8	17330.7	17619.2		
Paris	CAC 40	2955.11	-5.54	-0.19	2957.56	2906.81	2960.65		
Frankfurt	DAX	4188.32	-54.49	-1.28	4243.25	4155.48	4243.01		

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET											
HOUSING BANK CHARTER AMMAN - SEMESTRAL											
TELEPHONE: 607171 / 607179											
ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SATURDAY 11/10/1997											
											
PART	12 MONTHS	COMPANY'S NAME	P / E	DIV.	NO. OF	NO. OF	VALUE	OPEN	CLOSE	CHANGE	
	HIGH	LOW			TRANS.	SHARES	TRADED		PRICE		
					JD						
	346.000	241.500	ARAB BANK	15.4	1.19	1	100	33550	335.50	335.50	-
N	2.340	1.680	JOR. NATIONAL BK.	8	0.00	12	43550	84487	1.94	1.94	-
	2.190	.890	MID. EAST TRV. BK.	76.9	0.00	34	116876	136743	1.11	1.17	+0.06+
	2.600	2.150	INDUSTRIAL DEV. BK.	10.2	6.16	38	20750	53405	2.55	2.57	+0.02+
	5.200	4.600	THE HOUSING BK.	14.9	3.90	13	57000	283860	4.93	4.98	+0.05+
	2.050	.740	JOR. GULF BANK	4.7	8.86	7	2230	1766	.79	.79	-
	3.050	3.520	JOR. ISLAMIC BANK	15.0	3.25	14	3355	12375	3.67	3.69	+0.02+
	2.750	3.080	JOR. INV. FIN. BANK	23.8	0.00	4	420	1546	3.58	3.71	+0.13+
	2.030	.890	BEST AL-HAL (BETTER)	6	16.48	1	250	228	.92	.91	-0.01-
BANK SECTOR TOTALS											
	2.170	1.590	JOR. FRENCH INSUR.	5.4	7.81	1	150	288	1.92	1.92	-
INSURANCE SECTOR TOTALS											
	2.050	1.950	JOR. ELECTRIC PWR.	9.2	5.24	18	5445	10399	1.91	1.91	-
	4.030	1.320	IBRD ELECTRICITY	20.9	3.28	2	700	2461	3.69	3.51	-1.18-
	1.740	1.150	MID. EAST HOTELS	21.3	0.00	9	18300	25620	1.40	1.40	-
	1.170	.930	SABA EDUCATION	9	0.00	2	1500	1400	.94	.93	-0.01-
	.950	.640	UNION LAND DEV.	9	0.00	15	6125	4768	.74	.78	+0.04+
SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS											
	1.080	.930	ATTACHMENT	9	0.00	4	502	502	1.00	1.00	-
	4.450	3.220	JOR. CEMENT FACT.	23.2	3.18	21	5471	19031	3.54	3.46	-0.08-
	4.140	3.000	JOR. PHOSPHATE MINES	10.3	2.70	2	800	2960	3.70	3.70	-
	7.050	5.420	ARAB POTASH CO.	14.0	3.33	10	700	4200	6.03	6.00	-0.03-
	11.100	9.070	JOR. PETROL. REFINERY	10.6	8.10	10	392	4296	10.97	10.97	-
	1.410	1.050	WOOLAN INDUSTRIES	9.4	9.17	4	5500	5997	1.12	1.09	-0.03-
	3.260	1.610	INDUSTRIAL COMM. AG.	9	0.00	4	395	617	1.61	1.60	-0.01-
+	7.150	5.800	JOR. MORTGAGE BK.	11.1	2.90	3	1000	5925	6.95	6.90	-0.05-
	4.700	3.040	ARAB PHARM. MANF.	12.6	4.39	20	6057	27700	4.60	4.55	-0.04-
	3.850	2.220	ARAB ALUM. IND.	5.6	10.50	1	100	238	2.39	2.38	-0.01-
	7.10	.450	LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	10.5	0.00	4	1950	978	.51	.50	-0.01-
	1.230	.820	ARAB PAPER COV. TRD.	27.2	0.00	4	1350	1212	.93	.89	-0.04-
	1.200	.510	INTERMED. PETRO. CHEM.	9	0.00	18	14550	8189	.57	.56	-0.01-
	.890	.530	JOR. SUGAR COV. TRD.	9	0.00	8	5500	3833	.70	.69	-0.01-
	1.670	1.120	ARAB PHARM. CHEM.	16.5	5.43	7	1150	1473	1.28	1.29	+0.01+
	1.880	1.080	UNIV. MOON. INDUS.	12.1	0.00	12	7600	9292	1.23	1.22	-0.01-
	1.460	.890	JOR. INDUS. RESOURCES	12.2	10.99	2	2100	1931	0.92	.91	-0.01-
	1.620	1.300	MAZL. CHLORINE	14.7	4.49	4	7000	10920	1.56	1.56	-
	1.070	.810	JOR. NEW CABLE CO.	15.8	0.00	13	6950	6014	.87	.88	-0.01-
	1.320	1.080	UNIV. TOBACCO	6.3	0.00	3	1750	2030	1.18	1.16	-0.02-
	1.200	.860	UNION CH. & VEG.	52.7	0.00	6	4900	5674	1.13	1.16	+0.03+
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS											
	INDEX: 116.15	INDEX: -0.72	152	75717	124010						
GRAND TOTAL											
	INDEX: 173.48	INDEX: -0.14	323	352468	776903						
PARALLEL MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SATURDAY 11/10/1997											
	630	300	CENTRAL GEN. STORAGE	9	0.00	5	10450	3405	.32	.33	+0.01+
	.610	.380	JOR. TRADE FAC.	10.7	0.00	56	181750	73178	.41	.40	-0.01-
	.790	.660	UNION INV. SOF	9	0.00	29	128500	37258	.78	.79	+0.01+
	.570	.360	ARAB FIN. INVEST.	9	0.00	15	40350	16100	.40	.40	-
N	.950	.720	AL-SINAO INV. TRD.	2	0.00	2	2136	1816	.68	.68	-
	1.110	.850	UNITED FOR PIRAM. INV	57.3	0.00	5	550	110	1.11	1.10	-0.01-
	.540	.380	ARAB INTL. INV. TRD.	47.2	0.00	1	2750	1105	.40	.41	+0.01+
	.650	.380	MAZL. TEXTILE	10.5	0.00	3	1500	585	.39	.39	-
	.750	.400	MAZL. MULT. ENG. MANICO	9	0.00	25	124200	51412	.41	.41	-
N	1.020	.890	REMY HSI INC CONCRETE	12.1	0.00	1	5000	5000	.98	1.00	+0.02+
	.810	.710	JORDAN STEEL	33.8	6.67	3	609	75	.70	.75	+0.05+
	.520	.460	ARAB ELECT. TRD.	8	0.00	1	7000	3220	.46	.46	-
	.650	.580	MIDESTAT PHARM. 75%	9	0.00	12	42300	15651	.61	.62	+0.01+
T	1.300	.860	UNION TOBACCO 75%	9	0.00	6	10840	1084	1.30	1.33	+0.03+
	.580	.580	MAZL. PHARM. 85%	9	0.00	6	3800	1938	.66	.66	-
	.490	.290	INDUS. ENG.	9	0.00	13	10700	3561	.34	.33	-0.01-
	.620	.590	MAZL. POULTRY	9	0.00	7	4150	2614	.64	.63	-0.01-
N	1.250	.820	ARAB TRV. TRD. FACT.	44.8	0.00	9	1588	1429	.89	.75	-0.14-
	.840	.580	MID. EAST COMPLEX	7.5	16.39	29	73700	45384	.61	.61	-
GRAND TOTAL											
	220	659621	274451								

Villeneuve aims for title under suspension in Japan GP

SUZUKA (AFP) — Canadian Jacques Villeneuve races for the 1997 World Drivers' Championship in Sunday's Japanese Grand Prix, but could lose it Paris a few days later.

In an extraordinary sequence of events, Villeneuve could still finally beat rival Michael Schumacher to the title in the season's final race in Jerez, Spain, Oct. 26.

Villeneuve was first disqualified from the race on Saturday for an admitted fault in practice before he won pole position for the race, then reinstated to race after his Williams-Renault team appealed.

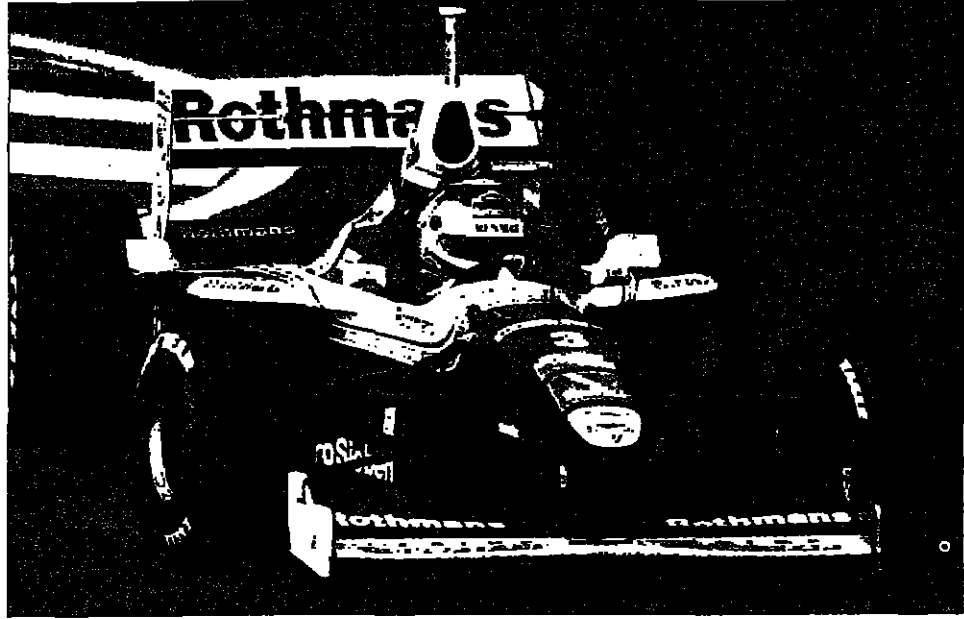
Officials of the International Automobile Federation (FIA) said it was hoped the appeal would be heard by the FIA's International Appeal Tribunal in Paris before the final race of the season in Jerez, Spain, Oct. 26.

Villeneuve leads Schumacher by nine points and in theory only needs to finish one point ahead of him Sunday to win the title.

But the result and the title could be stripped from him by the Tribunal, which could also increase the penalty of disqualification from this race.

"I find it very difficult to accept now that we are fighting it out at the end of the championship," Villeneuve said.

"It's been a very difficult season, the most difficult



Formula One world championship leader Jacques Villeneuve of Canada drives his Williams to clock a fastest time of one minute 36.071 seconds on a qualifying practice session run at Suzuka Circuit for the Japanese Grand Prix. Villeneuve was disqualified from Sunday's Grand Prix race for ignoring a yellow caution flag during the practice run, and then later reinstated following an appeal (Reuters photo)

corner, I would have done."

Villeneuve had already been given a suspended one race ban for the same offence at the Italian Grand Prix, and the race stewards here made the suspension active, banning him from Sunday's race.

They also inflicted various suspended penalties on five other drivers Saturday for failing to respond to the same flag situation.

Schumacher in his Ferrari, Japan's Ukio Katayama in a Minardi-Hart, Briton Johnny Herbert in a Sauber and another German, Heinz-

Harald Frenzen in a Williams-Renault received suspended one-race bans, an FIA statement said.

"A certain number of drivers did the same thing out of the nine who were on the track at the same time," Villeneuve said.

"We believe we have good reason to appeal. Hopefully the appeal will be worth something for the Championship," he said.

Villeneuve and Schumacher start the race on the front row of the grid, with Schumacher's teammate Eddie Irvine behind them on the second row with Mika Hakkinen (McLaren Mercedes).

Heavyweight hopefuls seek title fight with Lewis

LAS VEGAS (AFP) — American heavyweights Ray Mercer, Tim Witherspoon and James "Buster" Douglas are hoping to lure British champion Lennox Lewis into a fight for his World Boxing Council title.

Lewis beat Andrew Golota in 95 seconds to keep his crown one week ago to set up a likely title fight against the winner of next month's bout between rival champions Evander Holyfield and Michael Moore.

Mercer has offered Lewis \$20 million for a title bout and vows to fight for free if Lewis agrees to donate \$10 million to a charity of Mercer's choosing should Mercer beat him for the title.

Mercer lost a 10-round decision to Lewis 17 months ago. Witherspoon, who fights Levi Bullup next month, is promoted by the same group that backs Lewis.

Douglas, who pulled out of a Saturday bout while in the midst of a comeback after retirement, wants to fight anyone with a title to legitimize his return.

Vaughn Bean and Orlin Norris have legal claims to fight for titles against the Holyfield-Moore winner but both sanctioning bodies are likely to waive the mandatory challenges as neither challenger offers as lucrative a pay-per-view option as Lewis.

Unfit Perkins makes way for new Aussie swim sensation

BRISBANE (AFP) — Under-prepared Kieren Perkins was blown away by new swimming sensation Grant Hackett and won't get the opportunity to defend his world title after finishing third in the 1500 metres freestyle at the Australian championships here Saturday.

The Australian great, who holds three world records and is a dual Olympic 1500m gold medallist, struggled home almost 22 seconds adrift of 17-year-old Hackett, who looks set to assume Perkins' mantle as Australia's premier swimmer.

Hackett stormed to a personal best 15 minutes 01.46 seconds, just failing to break the 15-minute barrier with a sizzling 57.36 seconds final lap to beat Atlanta Olympic silver medallist Daniel Kowalski (15:08.05) and Perkins (15:23.45).

Only two swimmers per event are chosen for the world championships in Perth next January, so Perkins, the reigning 400m and 1500m freestyle world champion, misses out on swimming against the world's best.

Perkins finished fifth in Wednesday's 400m freestyle final behind Hackett and failed to qualify for the 200m freestyle final, ruling him out of even a relay swim at the world titles.

Perkins' time Saturday was more than 42 seconds behind his phenomenal world record 14:41.66 at the Victoria Commonwealth Games in Canada in August 1994.

"It's the longest 30 laps I've ever swum and I'm feeling very sore," Perkins said.

The 24-year-old superstar was unable to produce the same face-saving effort as at last year's Atlanta Olympics where he came back after only just scraping into the final to smash the 15-minute barrier and win his second consecutive Olympic gold in the event.

Earlier that year, he also rose to the occasion with a last gasp silver behind Kowalski in the 1500m at the Sydney Olympic trials to make the Atlanta team.

Perkins, though, had made it clear this week that making the team for Perth never had the same sense of urgency as the possibility of missing the Olympics.

"I'm not too unhappy with missing the team because there's always been the

expectation that I might," he said.

The new father came into the meet only 85 per cent fit after a disruptive year which included marriage and the birth of daughter Georgia Jane last month.

He said he would now get back into training in preparation for an assault on April's trials for the Kuala Lumpur Commonwealth Games next September.

"I want to stay in the sport because it's what I love," he said.

"I've got six months to get myself back together and give these boys a fright when the Commonwealth Games trials come around."

"There's a lot of things I can work on and six months to do it in."

Hackett's swim is the second fastest recorded in the world this year behind Italian Emiliano Brembilla, who clocked 14:58.65 at the European titles in August.

But the 17-year-old high school student, who annexed the 400m-800m-1500m freestyle treble at the Pan Pacific Championships in Japan last August, was disappointed with his time.

He went into the feature race hoping to become the eighth swimmer to go under the magical 15 minutes for the 30-lap event.

"I should have taken the race out harder," said Hackett, who upped the tempo at the 1100m to pull away from Kowalski.

Kowalski's effort to make the Perth team is remarkable considering he suffered serious shoulder and back problems this year.

The 22-year-old came into the meet on a greatly reduced training schedule.

"I started with 3km when I got back into training in July and I've just been building up each week," said Kowalski.

"I was still only doing about 38km a week leading into the meet compared with my usual workload of about 80km."

His time ranks him fourth on 1997 world rankings.

World Judo Championship Revenge for Nakamura clan as gold beckons for Restoux, Gonzalez

PARIS (AFP) — Japanese strength in depth allowed their judokas to exact revenge on Udo Quellmalz here on Saturday as the Olympic and world champion found himself ambushed by Kenzo Nakamura, who scored a waza-ari win to reach the final of the men's -71kg division.

Quellmalz moved up a category to take on Kenzo, the reigning Olympic champion in the division, after excelling in the half light-weight class both at Atlanta and in Chiba two years ago.

On those two occasions the German forced Japan to make do with silver after Quellmalz got the better of Yukimasa Nakamura, one of Kenzo's two older brothers, who are also competing here.

The eldest of the Nakamura clan, Yoshio, got a bronze in the -95kg category on Thursday.

Yukimasa, a gold medallist in 1993, was Japan's main loser of the day as he sensationally lost to Algeria's Amar Meridja on a decision with the pair locked at a yuko each.

But Meridja then lost out on making the -65kg pool final as he succumbed to France's European bronze medalist Larbi Benboudaoud, earlier the conqueror of South Africa's Duncan Mackinnon by a waza-ari for a stranglehold.

The crowd erupted in fury when Benboudaoud was handed a penalty which would have put the Algerian just in front but he finally lost out on a yuko having scored three kokas to the Frenchman's none.

Meridja then provoked a



Kazuo Nagai of Japan (R) in action against Ralfae Imbriani of Germany in the first round of the -52kg category at the World Judo Championships (Reuters photo)

storm of booing when he raised a clenched fist to the ebullient French fans.

George Vazagashvili of Georgia awaited Benboudaoud in the pool final.

Japan went into the third day of the four-day championship trailing in third place in the medals table with just the one gold secured by Noriko Anno in the women's -72kg class, compared with three for the effervescent French and two for bitter rivals South Korea.

And France looked set to retain their advantage as, in the women's -52kg event, Olympic and world champion Marie-Claire Restoux swept into the pool final after surviving a scare to win a decision against

Marisa Pedulla of the United States and then beating Lucie Baillargeon of Canada.

Restoux, who could only manage bronze at the European championships in Ostende, was greeted on each occasion with deafening applause and shouts of "Marie-Claire".

Former double champion, British veteran Sharon Rendle, was bundled out of the gold and silver reckoning as the 1995 bronze winner lost on ippon to Legna Verdecia of Cuba.

Restoux was on a collision course with North Korean Kye Sun Hui, who won the -48kg title in Atlanta before changing category.

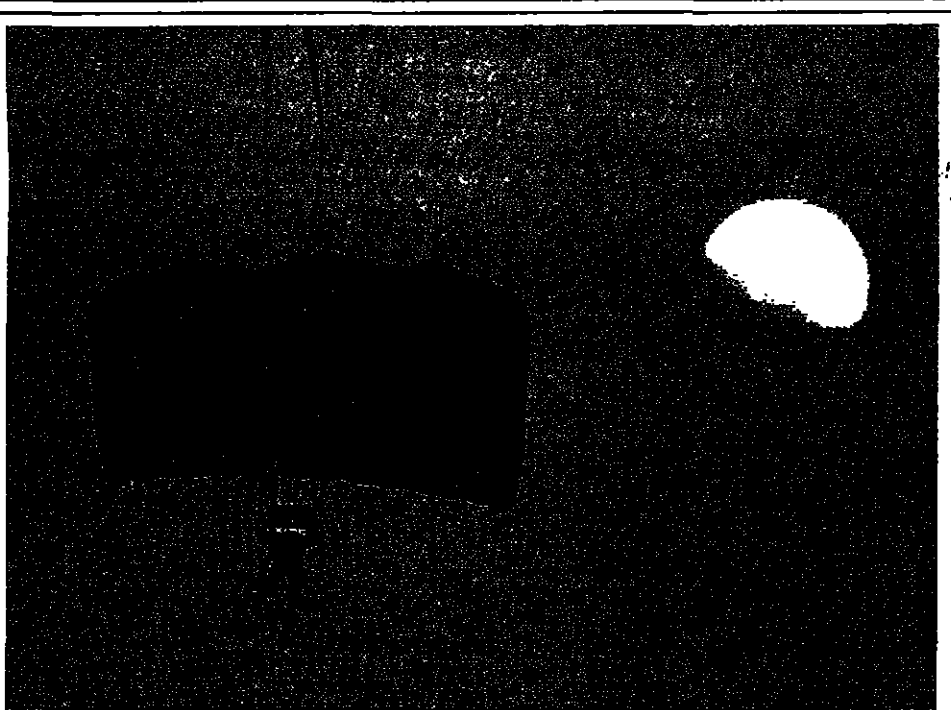
In the women's light-weight (-56kg) section, reigning Olympic and world

champion Driulis Gonzalez of Cuba scored a waza-ari win over European bronze medalist Magali Baton of France, who knocked out South Korea's Park Mi Hee, East Asian Games bronze winner, by waza-ari.

Korean Atlanta silver medalist Jung Sun Yong was not competing here, while yet another Korean star, Jung Sung Sook, decided not to go in for event where she snatched silver behind Gonzalez two years ago, preferring to turn her efforts to the lightweight event, where she took gold in 1995.

Japan's Chiyori Tazono, who won the Austrian open last year, lost on ippon to Spain's Atlanta bronze medalist Isabel Fernandez.

A skydiver sails past the moon into Jakarta's main stadium October 11 for the opening ceremony of the South East Asian Games (SEA Games). More than 4,300 athletes from 10 countries are participating in the regional sporting event, which lasts until October 19 (Reuters photo)



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David Milcan, General Manager, will be staying at the Marriott Hotel in Amman on Tuesday, 14th and Wednesday 15th October. Interviews will be conducted at the hotel, therefore candidates should bring with them a copy of their resume and a recent photograph.

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TANNIA HIRSCH

WHAT A KNAVE'S TRICK

North-South vulnerable. North deals.

NORTH
A A Q 10
J J 10 9 6 3
O 4
A A K J 2

WEST
A K J 7 2
A Q 5 2
O 8 6 2
A 8 6

EAST
A 9 8 6 4
O K 8 4
O 5
A Q 10 8 5 3

SOUTH
A 5 3
O 7
A K Q J 10 9 7 3
A 7 4

The bidding:
NORTH EAST SOUTH WEST
12 Pass 30 Pass
2NT Pass 4NT Pass
30 Pass 60 Pass
Pass Pass

Opening lead: ?

If there is one choice of opening lead that gets universal approval, it is to make an aggressive lead against a freely bid small slam.

More often than not declarer has a side suit which will permit discards unless the defenders take their tricks first. An attacking lead may establish a second trick for the defense before declarer can utilize

that suit. What would you lead against six diamonds?
Note South's jump shift to three diamonds over the one-heart opening bid. In the modern style that does not promise more than a self-sufficient suit or a good hand with support for partner's suit, and no one will argue about the quality of South's suit. Four no trump was intended as no-asking and read as such, and South bid the small slam on learning that just one ace was missing.

Sitting West was one of the world's great players, Italian many-time world champion Benito Garozzo, now a resident of West Palm Beach. He ruled out a red-suit lead, and a club would be helpful only if partner held the king. Spades seemed a more promising suit, since the queen with partner was all that was required. But Garozzo did not choose just any spade — he selected the jack!

Consider the effect that would have on any player sitting South. With a fast heart loser, declarer needed to find either the king of spades or queen of clubs outside. The opening lead made it look as if the spade finesse was sure to fail, so declarer rose with the ace, drew trumps and then led a club to the jack — down two!

TODAY AT

CINEMA TEL: 634144

PHILADELPHIA "1"

Bruce Willis...in

THE FIFTH ELEMENT

Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30

CINEMA TEL: 634144

PHILADELPHIA "2"

Eddie Murphy...in

THE NUTTY PROFESSOR

Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30

CINEMA TEL: 699238

PLAZA

John Travolta & Nicholas Cage...in

FACE OFF

Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:00, 8:30, 10:30

CINEMA TEL: 677420

CONCORD

Holly Hunter & Sigourney Weaver...in

COPY CAT

(12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30)

CINEMA TEL: 079 33430

GALLERIA 1

ABDOUN

Will Smith & Tommy Lee Jones...in

MEN IN BLACK

Shows: 3:30, 6:00, 8:30, 10:45

CINEMA TEL: 079 33430

GALLERIA 2

ABDOUN

Julia Roberts...in

MY BEST FRIEND'S WEDDING

Shows: 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30

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JUNIA

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Algiers mosque bomb toll put at 6 dead, 40 wounded

PARIS (R) — An Algerian newspaper said Saturday a bomb blast at a mosque in Algiers during Friday prayers killed six worshippers and wounded 40 others, many of them critically. Newspapers said that on the same day a bomb exploded in a cemetery in a neighbouring town, killing an 11-year-old boy, and a bomb in another Algiers mosque was spotted and hurled outside the building before exploding, slightly wounding one man.

The dailies also reported two gunmen shot dead a moderate Islamist candidate for this month's local elections in the eastern town of Constantine, and government troops killed 13 Islamist rebels in Algiers and the western town of Oran.

A bomb ripped through a mosque in Bouzareah district on the heights of Algiers at noon Friday killing six people and wounding 40 more among worshippers gathered for Friday prayer, *Liberte* newspaper said.

Twenty-seven of the wounded were in serious condition, it said. Residents earlier said the bomb killed five people.

"I was giving the sermon when I saw a young man who was carrying a bag get in. He briefly got into a position of praying and then left before the explosion," the mosque's prayer leader told *Liberte*.

At another mosque in the area, a man spotted a hidden bomb and threw it out of window, the newspaper said. The bomb exploded outside the mosque, slightly injuring the man.

A third bomb exploded at a cemetery, killing a boy and wounding four people in Sidi Moussa, south of Algiers, *La Tribune* newspaper said.

Algerians usually visit cemeteries Fridays to pray for dead relatives.

No one claimed responsibility for the bombings. Several hundreds of civilians were killed in Algeria in the past three years on bomb attacks the authorities blamed on Islamist rebels.

Troops were swarming in Sidi Moussa area in a continuing two-week-long offensive to try to wipe out bases of the Armed Islamic Group (GIA), the most radical Islamist faction locked in nearly six years of conflict with the government

forces over power.

Security forces killed 11 Islamist rebels in the western town of Oran and two guerrillas in Algiers in the past three days, *Al Acil* newspaper said without giving further details.

Two gunmen burst into an optician shop in the eastern town of Constantine killing the owner, a member of the Islamist-leaning Movement of a Peaceful Society (MPS) and a candidate for the Oct. 23 local elections, said *Liberte*.

The newspaper named the optician as Noureddine Nait, shot at the head and chest in the Wednesday's attack. His party, one of two Islamist-oriented legal movements, is a junior member of coalition government dominated by President Liamine Zeroual's supporters.

No one claimed the killing and the newspaper said the assailants were thought to be Islamist rebels.

More than 60,000 people had died in Algeria's violence since early 1992 when the authorities cancelled a general election in which Islamists had taken a commanding lead.



Hindu devotees immerse the idol of their goddess 'Durga' in the Buriganga River Saturday marking her departure from the world after conquering the evil forces. The Hindu community, which constitutes 12.1 per cent of predominantly Muslim Bangladesh's 120 million population, celebrates the Durga Puja for five days. The community celebrates 13 such Puja festivals in 12 months (AFP photo)

Iran starts wargames in Gulf

U.S. aircraft carrier USS Nimitz rushes to region

DUBAI (R) — Iran's naval Forces on Saturday launched a week of wargames in the Gulf as the U.S. aircraft carrier USS Nimitz rushed towards the volatile region.

Iranian military chiefs said the exercise was aimed at demonstrating the Islamic Republic's ability to stand up to "aggressive powers."

"It's aim is to display Iran's power in defending its security and interests," state radio and television said. "It's message is peace and friendship to all neighbouring countries."

The wargames began as the USS Nimitz, ordered to hurry to the Gulf following tension over the Iran-Iraq border, approached the strategic waterway with its battle group of six warships.

Iran has not named a potential aggressor but has said it did not expect a confrontation with the Americans.

The U.S. keeps large naval and air forces in the region to protect the Gulf Arab oil monarchies, to enforce Washington's "dual containment" policy against Iran and Iraq, and to police a "no-fly zone" over southern Iraq.

U.S. combat aircraft based in Saudi Arabia and other Gulf Arab states patrol the "no-fly zone" daily. Patrols were stepped up after Iranian

warplanes last week struck two Iraqi bases of the armed Iranian opposition group Mujahedin Khalq.

Washington has warned Tehran that U.S. pilots could shoot down Iranian aircraft if they violated the flight ban imposed by the U.S. and its allies in 1992 to protect Iraqi Shiites from Iraqi air force.

Among the high-tech weaponry in the American arsenal is the "Tomahawk" — a low-flying cruise missile which can be launched from ships, submarines, aircraft and mobile ground units.

U.S. forces have fired scores of "Tomahawks" against Iraqi targets since the 1991 Gulf war.

The Nimitz battle group — the 73,000-tonne carrier with 50 combat aircraft plus an escort of two cruisers, one destroyer, one frigate, one submarine and one support ship — was being rushed to reinforce a U.S. fleet of five destroyers, three frigates and two mine counter-measure ships already in the Gulf.

A U.S. Navy spokesman at Fifth fleet headquarters in Bahrain said the Nimitz had not entered the Gulf yet. He said there would be no statement until the battle group had passed through the strait of Hormuz and was in Gulf waters.

Iran's Defence Minister Rear Admiral Ali Shamkhani said earlier this week he saw no reason for a clash with U.S. forces.

"From our side we do not see any reason for a confrontation. We are not sure about the intentions of the other side."

The Pirouzi (Victory)-8 exercise was being staged jointly by the Iranian Navy and naval units of the Revolutionary Guards.

Destroyers, frigates, fast attack boats, hovercraft, fighter and reconnaissance aircraft, and two of Iran's three Russian Kilo-Class diesel submarines manoeuvred in a 39,000-square kilometre area between Lavan island opposite the Gulf Arab state of Qatar and Kuwait in the northern Gulf.

The wargames, held every year, were planned before Washington ordered the Nimitz to skip a Singapore port call and hasten to the Gulf from the South China Sea.

The order followed Iran's hit-and-run air raids on the Mujahadeen-e-Khalq, which the U.S. this week included for the first time in a list of "terrorist" organisations.

Alkbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, who stepped

down as Iran's president in August but still wields weighty political influence in Tehran, said rushing the Nimitz to the Gulf was a reflection of Washington's confused policies on Iran.

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Dancing KLM crew brought down to earth

AMSTELVEEN (AFP) — A pilot and two cabin crew who went dancing atop a Boeing 747 have been "severely punished" by KLM Royal Dutch Airlines, it was reported Saturday. The jumbo jet's first officer and two female cabin crew had climbed onto the top of the aircraft for fun during a stopover in Guatemala City last month. But their antics were snapped by a passing Belgian photographer and the picture, showing the three in uniform laughing as they wobbled along on top of the plane, was published worldwide. KLM was not amused and "severely punished" the three, *De Telegraaf* said. It gave no details, but added that the aircraft's captain was suspended for a week.

Woman slaps Papandreou for dishonouring 'all women'

ATHENS (AFP) — Dimitra Papandreou, Greece's former first lady whose nude photographs are regularly splashed in a daily newspaper here, was slapped around the face Friday by a woman who accused her of dishonouring her sex. Papandreou, the widow of former statesman Andreas Papandreou, was signing her memoirs at a publishers when she was pounced upon by Natassa Aktypi. "You have dishonoured all women," Aktypi shouted, dealing her target two sharp slaps before being rushed away by security guards. Papandreou emerged from the building a short while later, after having met Aktypi, a 34-year-old married tax inspector, to say she would not be pressing charges.

Gun-toting granny gets no jail for casino heist

ALBUQUERQUE (R) — A 61-year-old grandmother who robbed a New Mexico Indian casino at gunpoint has escaped jail time because a federal judge ruled the casino was a "criminal enterprise" at the time of her heist. U.S. District Judge James Parker said Loretta Martinez should serve five years probation rather than go to prison and that she need not repay the Camel Rock Casino near Santa Fe for the full \$7,000 she stole on April 21. "The Pueblo's [Indian community's] unlawful conduct contributed significantly to provoking wrongful conduct of Martinez," Parker said at the sentencing hearing.

A sign of the times in South Dakota

SOUTH DAKOTA (R) — The state of South Dakota has started putting up billboards at its borders warning drug dealers to stay out, officials said. "Warning: If you bring drugs into South Dakota, plan to stay a long, long time," the signs read.

They huffed and puffed, but to no avail

BOGOTA (R) — President Ernesto Samper was briefly stranded in rural Colombia after the engines on his ageing presidential jet failed to start for a flight back to the capital. The Belgian-made Fokker aircraft, purchased by the president in the mid-1970s, was due to Samper, U.S. Ambassador Myles Frechette and other officials back to Bogota from central Tolima province where they attended a ceremony at a police air base. But while the plane was being refuelled, the president's pilot said the engines wouldn't start. The aircraft's engines were going again.

If weak, British nurse could be spared flogging — legal experts

DUBAI (AP) — A British nurse sentenced to 500 lashes in a murder case in Saudi Arabia could be spared the punishment if her lawyers can prove she is too weak to endure it, legal sources said Saturday.

The nurse, Lucille McLauchlan, 31, was sentenced to eight years in jail and 500 strokes of a whip after she was convicted as an accessory in the murder of Yvonne Gilford, a 55-year-old Australian nurse.

Her colleague, Deborah Parry, 38, also British, was convicted of intentional murder, a crime punishable under Saudi law by death unless the victim's closest relative agrees to commute the sentence to a jail term in return for financial compensation.

The sentences have caused an outcry in Britain whose foreign secretary, Robin Cook, described the possible lashings as "wholly unacceptable in the modern world."

In recent weeks, hope has been raised that Parry may escape execution — nurse Gilford's brother, Frank Gilford, is reported to have agreed to a \$1.2 million compensation. But McLauchlan's fate still remains unclear.

A lawyer in Saudi Arabia said that "if her lawyers show proof that she is not healthy enough to withstand the lashings, that would be grounds for waiving them."

McLauchlan cannot directly appeal against her eight-year jail term but her punishment along with Parry's is being reviewed by a higher court under a mandatory procedure similar to an appeals process in other countries.

A legal expert in the eastern city of Dhahran, where the murder took place, said the review court could decide that the sentence was too harsh, or too lenient. Finally, the verdicts must be endorsed by another court and by Saudi King Fahd.

Mr. Gilford, who lives in Australia, has not confirmed reports by defence lawyers that he has taken the first step to pardon Parry by declaring his intention to the Saudi court. The next step would be for him to formally waive the death sentence.

If he does that, Parry may either be freed immediately or end up spending no more than five years in prison, said another lawyer.

"Most murder convicts who are forgiven by the victim's family are immediately released," he said.

Like others discussing the case, the lawyers spoke on condition of anonymity in telephone interviews from Saudi Arabia.

Parry, McLauchlan and Gilford (the victim) worked together at the King Fahd Military Medical Centre. Gilford's bludgeoned body was found in her dormitory room, bearing multiple stab wounds. The prosecution said robbery was the motive.

PLC speaker denies Jordan-PNA relations in trouble over Yassin

(Continued from page 1)

Hamas leader Ahmad Yassin and other Palestinian prisoners for the two Mossad agents involved in the assassination attempt against Hamas' politburo chief Khaled Misha'al, was aimed at undermining his leadership.

Mr. Qoreia said that contrary to the news reports, Mr. Arafat stressed on the need to strengthen the coordination with Jordan and welcomed the release of Sheikh Yassin.

"The release of Sheikh Yassin... would enhance unity between the Palestinian people," said Mr. Qoreia.

Meanwhile in Ramallah, followers of Palestinian President Yasser Arafat's Fateh faction held a rally Saturday in his support, the Associated Press reported.

"We are out here today to show that we stand behind

President Arafat and against conspiracy attempts by Jordan and Israel to take over the leadership of the Palestinian people," said Iyad Asfi, a student who attended the rally.

Nearly one thousand supporters of Mr. Arafat's Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) faction, Fateh, turned out in downtown Ramallah chanting "Abu Ammar, we are behind you 100 per cent."

Meanwhile, Agence France Presse quoted the head of the preventive police in the Gaza Strip, Mohammad Dahlan, as accusing the Israeli prime minister of helping Hamas wage "terrorist acts" by freeing some of its leaders.

"Benyamin Netanyahu helps Hamas in its terrorist operations," said Colonel Dahlan in an interview with the Egyptian newspaper *Al-Ahram*.

"The last Hamas operations saved Netanyahu from the crisis he found himself in. It was a life buoy enabling him to relaunch attacks against the Palestinian [National] Authority," Col. Dahlan was quoted as saying.

He also criticised the relations between Hamas and Jordan, questioning the release of Sheikh Yassin to Jordan and the fact that Amman welcomed former Hamas leader Musa Abu Marzouk in April on his release from the U.S. where he was detained.

Mr. Qoreia said that he briefed Dr. Majali on the results of President Arafat's meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Wednesday and the forthcoming meeting between Israeli and Palestinian negotiators in the U.S.

He said that following Mr. Arafat's meetings with the right-wing Israeli premier, "it is difficult to be optimistic."

Mr. Qoreia said that during the meeting, the Palestinians insisted on the Israeli pullout from the Palestinian territories in line with the Oslo accords.

He said that resuming negotiations with Israel was contingent on the Jewish state's implementation of accords, especially the articles that call for Israeli redeployment from further West Bank territory.

"The focal point in the agreement with the Israelis is the land. If no Israeli withdrawal from Palestinian lands took place, the [peace] agreement with Israel remains meaningless," Mr. Qoreia said.

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68 new runners join poll race bringing total to 508

(Continued from page 1)

over water and sovereignty on some of our land."

On the other hand, 195 banners of one of the few opposition candidates in the race, Secretary General of the Ba'ath Party Khalil Haddadin, were removed from the streets of Amman yesterday because they were referring to "the Zionist enemy."

"On Friday night, they started removing my banners, without giving me any written explanation and under the order of the governor of Amman," Mr. Haddadin, who is running for the Christian seat of the Amman Third District, told the Jordan Times, adding that he intends to sue the Amman Municipality for the matter.

He said the banners removed were calling for a "boycott of all Israeli products, to support local industry, and no to normalisation."

Another opposition candidate in Mr. Haddadin's district, Toujan Faisal, is expected to start her campaign soon.

Independent observers note that the number of candidates

this year appear lower than 1993 in many densely-populated and underprivileged districts, and explain it by the boycott of the elections declared by the Muslim Brotherhood and its political arm, the Islamic Action Front (IAF), as well as nine other left-leaning opposition parties and the union of professional associations.

In the Amman's First District, traditionally an Islamist stronghold, only 21 candidates have so far joined the race for the three allocated Muslim seats.

The same applies to another underprivileged district in the capital, the Amman Second District, in which over 130,000 registered voters are called to choose three Muslim deputies among 17 candidates.

According to the Ministry of Interior, a total of 269,810 voters are registered in these two districts, which include two refugee camps, but it remains to be seen how many of them will collect their voting cards and how many will go to the polls, turning a deaf ear to the Muslim Brotherhood.

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IAEA submits positive report on Iraq, but keeps file open

(Continued from page 1)

uranium required for weapons-grade material, the report said.

But there were no indications that Iraq had produced "more than a few grammes" of weapons-usable nuclear material by its own means, "all of which has been removed from Iraq."

There were also no indications that Iraq "otherwise acquired weapons-usable nuclear material."

All the fuel from an Iraqi research reactor, which Iraq planned to divert to its clandestine weapons programme, had been "verified and fully accounted for

by the IAEA and removed from Iraq."

Finally, "there are no indications that there remains in Iraq any physical capability for the production of amounts of weapons-usable nuclear material of any practical significance."

But the report noted that key questions remained concerning Iraq's nuclear potential, and that the IAEA would require access to information from foreign sources to verify certain information.

Iraq submitted its most recent "final" account of its nuclear programme in